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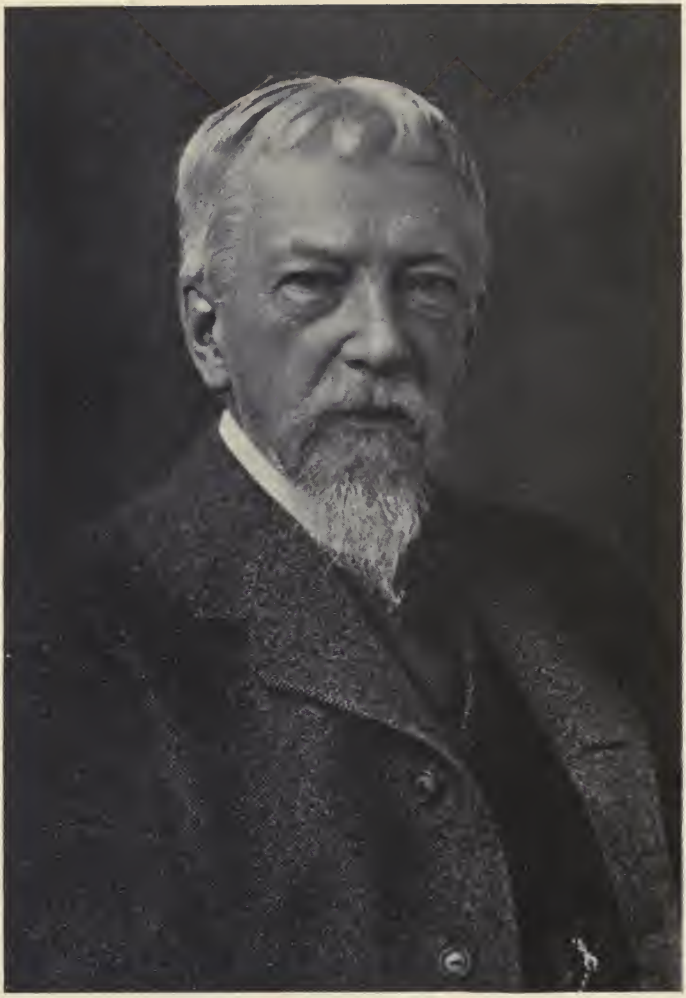
COMPLETE POEMS



DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL
This is his last photograph, taken a short time before his death

THE
COMPLETE POEMS

OF

S. WEIR MITCHELL
M.D. LL.D., HARVARD AND EDINBURGH

[Works. v. 16]

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1914

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The several volumes of Dr. Mitchell's poems have been gone over with care and certain unimportant omissions have been made from this book. It is believed that the present collection contains all that can be called thoroughly representative of the author's best productions.

CONTENTS

DRAMATIC POEMS

PAGE

Francis Drake 2
Philip Vernon 45
Responsibility 94
Wind and Sea 100
The Shriving of Guinevere 107
The Swan-Woman 111
A Medal 122
The Huguenot 126
How Lancelot Came to the Nunnery in Search of the Queen 131
The Hill of Stones 134
The Cup of Youth 145
My Lady of the Roses 173
How the Poet for an Hour Was King 177
The Violin 182
François Villon 194
The Miser: a Masque 211
The Wager 220
Barabbas 234

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

The Mother 259
Of Death and of One Who Fell on the Way . . 267
Of the Remembered Dead 269
E. D. M. 270
Pained unto Death: E. K. M. 271
The Whole Creation Groaneth 271
In the Valley of the Shadow: The Centurion . 273
A Canticle of Time 276
Lincoln 279
Coleridge at Chamouny 280
Tennyson 281
Cervantes 282

CONTENTS

PAGE

Of a Poet—Written for a Child 284
Herndon 284
The Tombs of the Regicides: Ludlow and Broughton 286
Kearsarge 287
How the Cumberland Went Down 288
My Castles in Spain 290
Dreamland 294
The Quaker Lady 296
The Quaker Graveyard 299
Dominique de Gourgues 300
The Wreck of the Emmeline 305
A Psalm of the Waters 310
Evening, After a Storm on the Ristigouche River . 313
Rain in Camp 316
Elk County 316
A Camp in Three Lights 320
Lake Nipigon 322
Nipigon—Evening Storm 322
Nipigon—Noonday Woods 323
After Sunset—Lake Weelokenebakok 325
The Roman Campagna 326
The Grave of Keats 328
Roma 329
Venice 331
Venice to Italy 332
The Decay of Venice 332
Pisa: The Duomo 333
The Vestal's Dream 334
After Ruysdael 334
After Albert Cuyp 335
Near Amsterdam: After Albert Cuyp 336
After Teniers 337
Milan: Da Vinci's Christ 337
Bruges: Quai des Augustins—After Van der Veer . 339
The Waves at Midnight: The Cliffs, Newport . 340
The Rising Tide 341
Evening by the Sea 341
Beaver-Tail Rocks: Canonicut 342
The Carry: Nipigon 343
Idleness 344
The Lost Philopena: To M. G. M. 344

CONTENTS

PAGE

GOOD-NIGHT 345
COME IN 345
LOSS 346
A GRAVEYARD 346
OCTOBER 346
SEPTEMBER 347
YOU AND I 347
THE CHRIST OF THE SNOWS: A NORWEGIAN LEGEND . 348
ST. CHRISTOPHER: FOR A CHILD 351
LINES TO A DESERTED STUDY 353
AN OLD MAN TO AN OLD MADEIRA 355
ADAM: A HUNGARIAN LEGEND 356
TO THE FORGET-ME-NOTS: ON THE PASS OF THE MAIDEN, JAPAN 358
TO A MAGNOLIA FLOWER 359
ON A BOY'S FIRST READING OF THE PLAY OF "KING HENRY THE FIFTH" 362
GUIDARELLO GUIDARELLI 363
A WAR SONG OF TYROL 367
THE "TEXAS" 368
THE SEA-GULL 369
EGYPT 371
GIBRALTAR AT DAWN 372
STORM-WAVES AND FOG ON DORR'S POINT, BAR HARBOR . 373
THE BIRTHDAY OF WASHINGTON 374
FLORENCE: APRIL FIRST 376
WHICH? 376
JEKYL ISLAND: EBB-TIDE 377
INDIAN SUMMER 377
FRIENDSHIP 379
LOVE 379
INNOGEN 380
PRAYER 381
THE ANGELS OF PRAYER 381
A CHILD'S PRAYER 381
LINES GIVEN TO M. AT CHRISTMAS 382
THE PURE OF HEART: GENNESARET 383
THE COMFORT OF THE HILLS 388
AN ODE OF BATTLES, GETTYSBURG AND SANTIAGO . . 394

CONTENTS

POEMS OF OCCASION

PAGE

A Doctor's Century: Read at the Centennial Dinner of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 1887 401

Minerva Medica: Verses read at the dinner commemorative of the fiftieth year of the Doctorate of D. Hayes Agnew, M.D., April 6, 1888 . . . 403

Verses: Read on the presentation by S. Weir Mitchell to the Philadelphia College of Physicians of Sarah W. Whitman's Portrait of Oliver Wendell Holmes, M.D. 408

A Decanter of Madeira, aged 86: to George Bancroft, aged 86 411

The Birth and Death of Pain: A Poem read October 16, 1896, at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first public demonstration of surgical anæsthesia in the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston 413

A Prayer, After Santiago 417

Books and the Man: William Osler. Read at the Charaka Club, March 4, 1905 418

On the Return of the Confederate Flags by Congress 422

Verses in Honor of William H. Welch, read at Johns Hopkins, April 2, 1910 424

To Abraham Jacobi, M.D., on His Seventieth Birthday 427

In Memory of William Henry Drummond . . . 429

Ode on a Lycian Tomb 435

Vesperal 439

Notes 443

DRAMATIC POEMS

FRANCIS DRAKE

A TRAGEDY OF THE SEA

TIME, 1578

At sea, off the coast of Patagonia, on board the *Pelican,* the *Elizabeth,* and the *Plymouth.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FRANCIS DRAKE.
THOMAS DOUGHTY, his friend.
FRANCIS FLETCHER, Chaplain.
JOHN WINTER, }
LEONARD VICARY, } Captains.
WILLIAM CHESTER, }
GENTLEMEN-VENTURERS.
SEAMEN.

FRANCIS DRAKE

Deck of the Elizabeth. Fleet in the offing.

JOHN WINTER. THOMAS DOUGHTY.

DOUGHTY *(coming aboard)*. Good-morrow, Winter.
Still the winds are foul.
I would they blew from merry England shores.

WINTER. I would they had not blown you to my ship.
None are more welcome elsewhere. Strict commands
Forbid this visiting from ship to ship.

DOUGHTY. These orders are most wise, — I doubt not that;
Yet must I learn that any here afloat
Is master of the gentlemen who venture
Their ducats and their lives. Let him make laws
To rule rough sailors; they are not for us.

WINTER. Yet one must be the master. Ill it were
If, drifting masterless, this little realm
Of tossing ships obeyed not one sure helm.
I shall but serve you if I bid you go.

DOUGHTY. The *Pelican* is twice a league away.
'T is time the several captains of the fleet
Should learn how little mind the seamen have,

Ay, and the gentlemen, to hold our course.
Now, were we all of us of one firm mind,
This cheating voyage should end, and that full soon.
This in your ear. Did I dare speak of Burleigh —
[*Winter recoils.*

WINTER. Have you a mind to lose us both our heads?
I would not ill report you, but your words
Sail near to treason, both to Queen and Friend.

DOUGHTY. I pray you but this once be patient with me.
My actions shall not lack support in England.
If I might dare say all, you best of any
Would know the admiral has no better friend.
The ships decay; the sailors mutiny;
Before us lies a waste of unknown seas;
Methinks authority doth beget in men
A certain madness. Think you if we chance
To ruin peaceful towns and scuttle ships,
And rouse these Spanish hornets on their coasts,
Think you the dearest counsellor of the Queen —
I may not name him — will be better pleased
With him that hurts or him that helps this voyage?

WINTER. I think your enterprise more perilous
Than half a hundred voyages, good friend —
I pray you risk not losing of the name,
For you are greatly changed from him I knew
This some time past of gentle disposition;
In danger tranquil; gay, and yet discreet;
Learned in the law, a scholar and a soldier.

DOUGHTY. An old-time nursery trick: comfits before,
And after comes the dose; then sweets again.

WINTER. Be not so hasty; hear me to the end,
And be my careful friendship early pardoned.
I have heard you say of late you lack advancement.

There is advancement no man need to lack
Who makes his Duty like a mother's knees,
Where all his prayers are said. This man you were.
What other man is this I hardly know:
One that of all his natural endowments
Makes but base use to stir the meaner sort,
To darken counsel with a mist of words,
To scatter falsehood, and to sow distrust;
And all as lightly as a housewife flings
The morning grain amidst her cackling crew.

DOUGHTY. You have done well to ask my pardon first.

WINTER. Nay. I do hold the bond of friendship strong;
And he who wills to keep his friends must know
To stomach that they lack. I would indeed
You had not spoken as you have to-day.

DOUGHTY. What matters it? My words are safe with you.

WINTER. Safe as my countenance will let them be;
Safe till the admiral asks, and, like a boy,
I stand a-twiddling of uneasy thumbs,
On this foot, now, or that, red in the face.
By Heaven! what fetched you on this hated voyage?

DOUGHTY. A trick. A fetch indeed!

WINTER. Nay, that 's not so.
Trick or no trick, this is not English earth,
Nor Drake the man who on the Devon greens
Sat half the night a-talking poesy.
I have seen many men in angry moods,
But this man's wrath is as the wrath of God,
Instant and terrible. Pray you, be warned,
And if your soul be capable of fear —

DOUGHTY. Fear!

WINTER. Ay, a healthful virtue in its place.
Had I been but the half as rash as you,
My very sword would tremble in its sheath.
DOUGHTY. And yet I have no nearer friend than he.
WINTER. You judge men by their love, as maidens do.
DOUGHTY. And not an ill way, either, as earth goes.
The admiral in his less distracted times
Hath some rare flavor of the woman in him.
WINTER. Oh, that 's the half of him: no lady wronged,
No pillaged church, no hurt of unarmed man,
Will stain his record at the great account.
Have then a care. The gentle, just, and brave
Are ill to anger.
DOUGHTY. What I say to you
I not less readily shall say to him,
Trusting the friendly equity of his love.
WINTER. A certain devil lurks in every angel,
Else had there never been a strife in heaven.
Now on my soul I wonder at the man.
Thrice has he warned you as a brother might,
And once removed you from a high command.
'T is very strange to me how men may differ.
No doubts have I; along these savage coasts
Magellan sailed. Are we not English born?
DOUGHTY. I neither have forgotten nor forget.
Thanks for your patience. There is more to say
That might be said.
WINTER. I would it had been less.
I think it well no other hears your words.
DOUGHTY. Oh, fear not I shall rashly squander speech.
WINTER. Spend not your thoughts at all. Be miserly.
These wooden walls have echoes; to and fro
Some wild word wanders, till, on each return,

We less and less our own mind's children know.
All gold they say is of the devil's mint;
But words are very devils of themselves.
I do commend you to a fast of speech.

DOUGHTY. It might be wise—but you'll not talk of this.

WINTER. Nay, that I will not. It is you will speak.
A restless tongue is ever no man's friend.
Come, let us shift the talk. 'T is perilous.

[Winter, as he speaks, walks to the rail.

How huge and bloody red the moon to-night!
This utter quiet of the brooding sea
I like not over well; nor yon red moon.
So, there 's a breeze again, and now 't is still.
We shall have storms to-morrow.

DOUGHTY. Reason good,
Before our ships are scattered far and wide,
That I should speak what others dare not speak.

WINTER. Nor I dare hear. My mother used to say
That silence was a very Christian virtue.
When I talk folly, be the Moon my friend;
There are no eavesdroppers among the stars.

DOUGHTY. Her sex, they say, are leaky counsellors;
And, too, she shares your secrets with a man,
Red i' the visage now. Here 's three to keep
Your pleasant indiscretions.

WINTER. Happy Moon!
That ere a day is dead shall England see.
Ah, gentle dame, shine on our island homes;
Kiss for my sake a face as fair as thine;
Go, tell our love to every maiden flower
That droops tear-laden in our Devon woods.

DOUGHTY. I dreamed last night that never more again
Should I see England.

WINTER. That 's as God may will.
I dare not think on England. Why should you?
What ails you now that you should look behind
When honor cries come on?
DOUGHTY. To be a child!
Is that your largest wisdom?
WINTER. Yes, well said!
Child, woman, man — the nobler life hath need
That man be all of these.
DOUGHTY (*is silent a moment*). I would that I
Were always near you, Winter. Drake has power
To tempt resistance as no other can.
With you, dear friend, my soul abides in peace.
WINTER. Seek you such peace as comes to those alone
Who have for friend the duty of the hour.
DOUGHTY. Enough of preaching.
WINTER. Well, so be it then;
But guard that restless tongue. When night is come,
And all these mighty spaces overhead
And all this vast of sea lie motionless,
God seems so near to me, ill deeds so far,
That all my soul in gentled wonder rests.
[*They are silent a time.*
DOUGHTY. Mark how the southward splendor of the cross
Shines peace upon us. When the nights are calm,
I joy to climb the topmast's utmost peak,
And, hanging breathless in the unpeopled void,
Note how the still deep answers star for star.
WINTER. See, the wind freshens. Get you to your ship.
Come not again. This seeming quiet sea
Is not more dangerous than a man we know.

DOUGHTY. 'T is not the danger checks me; yet be sure
I shall not spare to think upon your words.
You have my thanks. Good-night, and merry dreams.
See that you keep my counsel.
WINTER. Said I not,
'T was safe with me?
DOUGHTY (*goes over the rail to his boat*). Good-night, and better winds.
WINTER. Good-night to you.
The devil take the man.

Cabin of Pelican.

DRAKE. VICARY. WINTER.

WINTER. It sorts not with my honor that I speak.
DRAKE. Enough to know John Winter will not speak;
A cruel verdict is the just man's silence.
I have been patient, but the end has come.
What breeds these discontents? I know the man.
Were he twin brother of my mother's womb
He should not live to mar my Prince's venture.
(*To Vicary.*) Are you struck silent, like my good John Winter?
What substance is there in this mutinous talk?
VICARY. Too little substance, not enough to eat;
A prating parson, and some empty bellies.
A very mutinous thing 's an empty paunch.
DRAKE. Now here 's a man has never a plain answer.
Out with it in good English.
VICARY. As you will,
I pray you pardon me my way of speech;

I cannot help it. I was born a-grinning,
Or so my mother said. If death 's a jest,
I doubt not I shall never die in earnest.

DRAKE. Now on my soul this passes all endurance;
Grin, if it please you, but at least speak out.

VICARY. I never had as little mind to speak.

DRAKE. I have heard you jesting with a Spanish Don
When sore beset and well-nigh spent with wounds.
I think some counsel lies behind your mirth.

VICARY. Were I the admiral I would preach a sermon.

DRAKE. A sermon!

VICARY. Ay! and that a yardarm long,
And to conclude, a parson and a rope.
Also good rum 's a very Christian diet,
And vastly does console a shrunken belly.

DRAKE (*smiling*). Well, my gay jester, is there more to say?

VICARY. I sometimes think we carry on our ships
Too large a freight of time.

DRAKE. Talk plain again.
It takes three questions to beget an answer.

VICARY. Now, as the world runs, that 's unnatural many.

DRAKE. I think you will not speak.

VICARY. No, I 'm run dry.
I am as barren as a widowed hen.

DRAKE (*laughing*). Out with you. Go!

VICARY (*aside*). And none more glad to go.
[*Exit Vicary.*

DRAKE. One that must needs be taken in his humor.

WINTER. 'T is a strange disposition that has mirth
For what breeds tears in others.

DRAKE. No, not strange.
But I 've no jesting in my heart to-day.

The straits lie yonder, dark and perilous;
The Spaniards' villainies sit heavy here.
[*Strikes his breast.*
Their racks are red with honest English blood;
The dead call, "Come." Ah, Winter, by my soul,
When Panama is ours, when their galleons lie
Distressful wrecks, and England's banner flies
Unquestioned on the far Pacific sea,
Then —

WINTER. Is it so? Runs your commission thus?

DRAKE. Once past the straits, and all shall know my errand.

Here is the warrant of Her Majesty,
And here the sword she bade me call her own.

WINTER. Did Doughty know of this?

DRAKE. Ay, from the first.

WINTER. A double treason.

DRAKE. Counsel me, John Winter.
The sailors murmur, and the gentlemen
Sow quarrels and dissension through the fleet.
My dearest friend betrays my dearest trust.
What means this gay boy's chatter about time?

WINTER. A riddle easily read, if you but think
What use the devil has for idle hours.

DRAKE. I have long meant to make an end of that.
Go tell these lazy gentles, Francis Drake
Bids them to haul and pull as sailors do;
Ay, let them reef and lay out on the yards.
I 'll bid 'gainst Satan for their idleness.
Belike they may not care to go aloft;
Then, on my word, I 've bilboes down alow.

WINTER. Thou wouldst not set a gentle i' the stocks?

DRAKE. Gentle or parson, let them try me not.

'T is said a gibbet stands on yonder shore:
There brave Magellan hanged a mutinous Don.
Let them look to it. See I be obeyed.
None shall be favored. Fetch me now aboard
This traitor Doughty, and no words with him.

WINTER. Ay, ay, sir.

DRAKE. Go. Let there be no delay.

[*Winter in his boat beside the Plymouth.*

DOUGHTY (*descending*). What means this summons?

WINTER. Hush! I may not speak.
Give way there, men. (*To Doughty.*) Have you your tablets with you?

[*Takes them and writes:*

"Take care. Be warned. The devil is broke loose."

DOUGHTY. Why am I bidden?

WINTER. Way — give way there, men!

DOUGHTY. Will you not answer me?

WINTER. Not I, indeed.
Way there, enough! Ho, there, aboard!

[*Doughty goes aboard the Pelican.*

DOUGHTY. Good-day.

Deck of Pelican.

DOUGHTY. FLETCHER.

FLETCHER. I think there is some mischief in the air.
'T is said the admiral has sent for you.

DOUGHTY. I 'm haled aboard with no more courtesy
Than any meanest ruffian of the crew.
Were I in England he should answer me.

FLETCHER. This is not England.

DOUGHTY. Oh, by heaven! no!
(*Aside.*) Time must be won. I 've been a loitering fool.
(*Aloud.*) I would that I could clear my mind to you.
FLETCHER. Why not to me? What other is so fit?
Is not confession like an act of nature?
DOUGHTY. I am like a wine thick with confusing lees.
To-day they settle, and to-morrow morn
Another shakes me, and I 'm thick again.
[*Fletcher watches him. Both are silent for a moment.*
You are both man and priest.
FLETCHER. Add friend to both.
DOUGHTY. We said, most reverend sir, both man and priest.
Had you been more of man, yet all of priest,
Confession had been easier.
FLETCHER. More of man!
Grant you I lack the courage of the sea,
Think you it takes none to be now your friend?
I have the will, ay, and the resolution,
To help you when I think you most need help.
I guess the half your lips delay to tell.
DOUGHTY (*looking about him*). Enough. Time passes, and you should know all.
My Lord of Burleigh much mislikes this voyage.
Who helps to ruin it will no loser be.
Had I but known this ere my florins went
To help a foolish venture!
FLETCHER. But the Queen —
DOUGHTY. Hath ever had two minds, as is her way.
(*Points north.*) Now there advancement lies. (*Points south.*) And that way death.
FLETCHER. Art in the service of my Lord of Burleigh?
Not more than thou am I this admiral's man.

DOUGHTY. And I am no man's man; I am the Queen's.
I shall best serve my God in serving her.
Shall it be Prince or friend? I may not both.
FLETCHER. Is he thy friend?
DOUGHTY. Of late I doubt it much.
Now hath he closer counsellors than I.
FLETCHER. He loves thee not. This ill-advisèd voyage
Goes to disaster in these unknown seas
Where some foul devil led the sons of Rome.
'T is said that demons lit them down the coast.
This nine and fifty years no Christian sail
Has gone this deathful way. The admiral
Knows not the sullen temper of the fleet.
(*Looks at* DOUGHTY *steadily*). There should be one — a friend — to bid him turn
And set our prows toward England. Think on that.
DOUGHTY. But who shall bell the cat? What mouse among us?
FLETCHER. If but we English mice were of one mind!
DOUGHTY. Soon shall we be so. You have unawares
Made firm my purpose. 'T is not in your kind
To court such peril as our talk may bring.
The more for this have you my thanks. Enough.
The counsel given me —
FLETCHER (*alarmed*). I gave you none.
DOUGHTY. Oh, rest you easy. It is safe with me.
As you are priest, so I am gentleman;
Now in the end it comes to much the same.

Enter CHESTER.

CHESTER (*to* DOUGHTY). The admiral would see you instantly. [*Exit.*

Cabin of Pelican.

DRAKE. I would this man had been less dear to me;
Another I had long since crushed. The rat
Which gnaws the planks between our lives and death
I had as lightly dealt with. For love's sake
And all the honest past that has been ours
Once shall I speak. Once more: [*A knock.*
Ho there! Come in.

Enter CHESTER *and* DOUGHTY.

CHESTER. The land lies low to westward, and the wind
Blows fair and steady. [DRAKE *looks at the chart.*
DRAKE. Ay, St. Julian's isle.
[*Exit* CHESTER.
(*To* DOUGHTY). Pray you be seated.
DOUGHTY. I am ordered hither.
'T were fit I stand.
DRAKE. Yes, I am admiral;
But there are moments in the lives of all
When the stern conscience of a too great office
Appals the kindlier heart that fain would be
Where indecisions breed less consequence.
I said, be seated. [DOUGHTY *obeys.*
Are you not my friend?
Forget these rolling seas, the time, the place,
This mighty errand which my Prince has sped.
Think me to-day but simple Francis Drake,
And be yourself the brother of my heart.
DOUGHTY. There spoke the old Frank Drake I seemed to lose.

DRAKE. Let us try back. We are like ill-broken dogs.
Our lives have lost the scent.
DOUGHTY. Nay, think not so.
DRAKE. Ah, once I had a friend, a scholar wise,
A soldier, and a poet; dowered, I think,
With all the gentle gifts that win men's hearts.
Of late he seems another than himself;
Of late he is most changed, and him I knew
Is here no more. Ah, but I too am double,
And one of me is still your nearest friend,
And one, ah, one is admiral of the fleet.
Let him that loves you whisper to your soul
The thing he would not say. You understand.
Ah, now you smile. A pretty turn of phrase
Did ever capture you. 'T was always thus.
We have seen death so often, eye to eye,
That fear of death were idle argument;
Yet in such words of yours as men report
A deathful sentence lurks. Oh, cast away
These mad temptations, won I know not whence.
Last night I fell to thinking, ere I slept,
Of those proud histories of older days
You loved to tell amid the tents in Ireland.
Trust me, no one of these that shall not fade
Before the wonder of this English tale
Of what El Draco and his captains did.
And when, at twilight, by our Devon hearths
Some old man tells the story, shall he pause,
And say, But one there was, of England born,
That sowed the way with perils not of God,
Breeding dissension, casting on his name
Dishonor —
DOUGHTY (*leaping up*). Now, by heaven! no man
shall say —

DRAKE (*smiling and quiet, puts a hand on each shoulder of* DOUGHTY). Hush! you will waken up that other man.

Read not my meaning wrong. I am sore beset.
Before me lie dark days. The timid shrink;
The gentlemen, who should have been my stay,
Fall from me useless. Yet, come what come may,
For England's glory and my lady's grace,
I go my way. Well did he speak who said,
"Heaven is as near by water as by land."
And therefore, whether it be death or fame
That waits in yonder seas, I go my way.
Yet, if I lose you on this venturous road,
Half the proud joy of victory were gone.
I have been long; you, patient. Rest we here.

DOUGHTY. Yes, I am more than one man; more's the pity.

If I have sinned, forgive me, and good-night.

DRAKE. Thou shalt stay with me on the Pelican.

DOUGHTY (*aside*). So, so. A child in ward! (*Aloud.*) Again, good-night. [*Exit.*

[*Enter* VICARY.

VICARY. The water shoals. A land lies west by south.
There seems good anchorage in the island's lee.

DRAKE. We shall find water here, good fruit and fish.
Send in a boat for soundings. Signal all
To anchor where seems best; and Vicary,
Set thy gay humor to some thoughtful care
Of him that left just now. I hold him dear.

VICARY. I would to heaven he were safe in England.

DRAKE. And I, and I. He is more like a child
Than any man my life's experience knows.
Yet he is dangerous to himself and us;

Too fond of speech; too cunning with the tongue;
That tempts to mischief like a sharpened blade.

VICARY. Ah, words! words! words! Ye children of the fiend,
On all your generated repetitions
Is visited your parents' wickedness.
He keeps boon company with each man's humor,
Is gay with me, is chivalrous with you,
At Winter's side a grave philosopher.
I shall set merry sentinels for his guards,
And there my wisdom ends.

DRAKE. My Thanks. No more.

[*Exit* VICARY.

Deck of Pelican. Ships at anchor near the north end of the island of St. Julian.

DOUGHTY. WINTER. SEAMEN.

WINTER. These are my orders.

DOUGHTY. I may not to shore;
And for the reason? Drake shall give it me.

[*Turns to the men.*

I hear there is no water on these shores.

1ST SAILOR. That in the casks is but mere mud of vileness; rot in the mouth, and stenches in the nose.

2D SAILOR. And for the biscuits, they are moldy green, and inhabited like an owl's nest with all manner of live things.

3D SAILOR. It will be worse in the lower seas. There the men are eleven cubits tall.

2D SAILOR. Nay, feet, and that 's enough.

4TH SAILOR. Where scurvy Dons have gone, good English may.

DOUGHTY. We gentles are no better off than you.
Here is an order, we shall pull and haul
And lay aloft. What! Lack ye meat to-day?
Here are grubs to spare. These caverned biscuits hold
Small beeves in plenty. Here's more life, I think,
Than we are like to find on yonder coast.

1ST SAILOR. A Portugee did tell me once there was no day in the straits where we must sail, and all the sea be full of venomed snakes.

DOUGHTY. Nay. That's a foolish fable. True it is that in the straits are mighty isles of ice, with sail and mast. They beat about, men say, like luggers on a wind, and never man to handle rope or sail.

FLETCHER. The boats are come again, and no water, none! Alas, this miserable voyage!

Enter VICARY *from boat.*

VICARY. Not so, good chaplain. Underneath a cliff
I found a spring as sweet as England's best.
Good store of shellfish, too, and these strange fruits.
(*To* DOUGHTY). You're but an old wife at these fireside tales. Lord, lads! there's wonders yonder. It is twice as good as a fair in May. There's only a merry-go-round that's called a swirlpool. Round you go, a hundred years, ship and all, not a farthing to pay, and then home to bed, with addled pates, as good as drunk, and no man the poorer. [*The men laugh.*

1ST SAILOR (*aside*). He do lie to beat a rusty weather-cock.

2D SAILOR. But men do say there's hell-traps set along the rocks, and all the waters boil like witch's pots.

VICARY (*laughs*). The tale is gone awry. When last I sailed this way, no fire would burn, and all the little fiends were harvesting of mighty icicles to keep the daddy devils from frosted toes.

1ST SAILOR (*aside*). He be a lively liar. He be a very flea among liars. [*All laugh.*

VICARY. The seas be rum, and all the whales mad drunk. [*Laughter.*
I thought my laughter trap was baited well.

4TH SAILOR (*aside*). He don't starve his lies. A very pretty liar. His lies be fat as ever a Christmas hog.

VICARY. Tom Doughty, I'll match lies with you, my lad,
The longest day of June. A song, a song!

SAILORS. A song, a song! The captain for a song!

VICARY. Here's for a song. The admiral bids say
Your rum is doubled for a week to come.
So, here we go. Be hearty with the burden.

SONG.

Queen Bess has three bad boys,
Such naughty boys!
They sailed away to Cadiz Bay
To make a mighty noise.
Heave her round!
Heave her round!
Such bad boys!
Yo ho!

There's wicked Master Drake,
As likes to play with guns;

He sailed away to Cadiz Bay
To wake the sleepy Dons.
Heave her round! etc.

These be three captains small,
None taller than a splinter.
One does admire to play with fire,
That 's little Jacky Winter.
Heave her round! etc.

There 's one does love to fight,
It might be Billy Chester.
And they 're away to Cadiz Bay
Before a stiff sou'-wester.
Heave her round! etc.

Don Spaniard sings, Avast!
What 's doing with them grapples?
We 're just Queen Bess's naughty boys,
We 're only stealing apples.
Heave her round! etc.

They filled their little stomachs,
They had a pretty frolic.
The boys as ate the apples up
Was n't them as had the colic.
Heave her round! etc.

Small Frank he shot his gun,
And Willy played with fire.
To see those naughty boys again
No Spaniard do desire.
Heave her round; etc.

VICARY. Well tuned, my lads. Now who of you 's for shore?

DOUGHTY (*aside to a mate*). There 'll be no songs down yonder.

WINTER (*leaning over him*). What, again?
More mischief, ever more? Dark is the sea
Where you will sail. What fiend possesses you?
This in your ear. The priest is no man's friend.
If I do know the malady of baseness,
There 's one that needs a doctor.

DOUGHTY. You are wrong.
I have no better friend, none more assured.

WINTER. Indeed, I think you are too rich in friends.
Better you had a hundred eager foes
Than this man's friendly company. One step more,
One slight excess of speech, some word retold —
And you are lost to life.

DOUGHTY. He dare not do it!

WINTER. Dare not! I think it oft doth chance a man
Knows not his nearest friend as others do.
As for your priest — I greatly fear a coward.
The day will come when honest Francis Drake
Will shake all secrets from him as a dog
Shakes out a rat's mean life. Beware the day!
Well do I know the admiral's silent mood;
Then should men fear him, and none more than you,
Because he dreads the counsel of his heart.

[*Exeunt both.*

Deck of the Pelican. Evening, a week later. The fleet at anchor near the south end of the island of St. Julian. Sailors at the capstan.

WINTER. Now, then, to warp her in. Round with the capstan.
Sailors and gentlemen, bear all a hand!
DOUGHTY. Not I, by heaven! Not I! My father's son
Stains not his sword-hand with this peasant toil.
GENTLEMEN. Nor I! nor I! nay, never one of us.
WINTER. Do as I bid you!
DOUGHTY. Not a hand of mine
Shall to this sailor work.
WINTER. That shall we see.
[*Walks to the cabin.* *Boatswain whistles. Men man the capstan, singing:*

Yo ho! Heave ho!
Oh, it 's ingots and doubloons,
Oh, it 's diamonds big as moons,
As we sail,
As we sail.
Yo ho! Heave ho!

Oh, it 's rusty, crusty Dons,
And it 's rubies big as suns,
As we sail, etc.

Oh, it 's pieces by the scores,
And it 's jolly red moidores,
As we sail, etc.

Oh, we 'll singe King Philip's beard,
And no man here afeard,
As we sail, etc.

Enter VICARY.

VICARY. Well sung. Well hauled, my lads. (*To* DOUGHTY). A word with you.
You will attend the admiral in his cabin.
(*Aside to* DOUGHTY.) 'Ware cat, good mouse! The claws are out to-night!

DOUGHTY. 'T were better soon than later. After you.
[*Exeunt.*

Cabin of Pelican.

DRAKE. WINTER.

Enter VICARY, *followed by* DOUGHTY.

DRAKE. Pray you be seated. (*To* DOUGHTY.) Nay, not you, not you.
(*To* WINTER.) Arrest this gentleman.

WINTER. Your sword, an 't please you.
[*Receives it.*

DRAKE. I charge you here with treason to the Queen.
You shall to trial with no long delay.

DOUGHTY. What court is this with which you threaten me?

DRAKE. Now, by St. George, your lawyer tricks and quibbles
Shall help you little. I am Francis Drake,
The Queen's plain sailor, and the master here.

DOUGHTY. Master!

DRAKE. Ay, master! Traitor to the Queen,
This long account is closed. All, all is known,
Since when, at Plymouth, on the eve we sailed,
My Lord of Burleigh bought you; what the price
The devil knows — and you.
DOUGHTY. My Lord of Burleigh!
I pray you speak of this with me alone.
What I would say is for a secret ear.
DRAKE. No, by my sword, not I!
DOUGHTY. Then have your way.
No law can touch me here. This is not England.
DRAKE. Where sails a plank in English forests hewn,
There England is. This deck is England now,
And I a sea-king of thus much of England.
Put me this man in irons! See to it!
Let him have speech of none except yourselves.
[*Exeunt* WINTER *and* DOUGHTY.
(*To* VICARY.) I have too long delayed.
VICARY. That may well be.
DRAKE. I hear he hath great favor with the crews,
A maker of more mischief than I guessed.
VICARY. Men love him well.
DRAKE. He hath too many friends.
This is the very harlotry of friendship.
Go now, and pray that when command is yours
You have no friends. See that strict guard be kept.
[*Exit* VICARY.
(*Alone.*) I would that God had spared me this one hour.

Pelican. DOUGHTY *in irons on the deck, seated upon a coil of ropes, leaning against a mast.*

WINTER (*to the guards*). Back there, my men!
DOUGHTY. You are most welcome, Winter.

I am very glad of company. My soul
Is sick to surfeit of its own dull thoughts.
I like not lonely hours. What land is that?
WINTER. St. Julian's cape.
DOUGHTY. Is that a cross I see?
It seems, I think, the handiwork of man.
WINTER. No cross is that; there stout Magellan hanged
Don Carthagene, vice-admiral of his fleet.
DOUGHTY. Wherefore?
WINTER. 'T is said he did dislike the voyage,
And had no mind to pass the narrow straits.
DOUGHTY. The strait he chose was narrower; mayhap
He had no choice — as I may not to-morrow.
[*Is silent a few moments.*
A little while ago, the scent of flowers
Came from the land. Their nimble fragrance woke,
As by a charm, some sleeping memories.
I dreamed myself again a fair-haired boy,
A-gathering cowslips in my mother's fields.
[*Pauses.*
There is no order that I shall not sing;
I can no mighty treason set to song.
WINTER. Sing, if it please you. I 'll be glad it doth.
What song shall 't be?
DOUGHTY. Ah me, those Devon lanes!
[*Sings.*

SONG.

I would I were an English rose,
In England for to be;
The sweetest maid that Devon knows
Should pick, and carry me.

To pluck my leaves be tender quick,
A fortune fair to prove,
And count in love's arithmetic
Thy pretty sum of love.
[*The men come nearer.*
Oh, Devon's lanes be green o'ergrown,
And blithe her maidens be,
But there be some that walk alone,
And look across the sea.

1ST SAILOR. 'T is a sad shame so gay a gentleman
Should lie in irons.
2D SAILOR. Ay, the pity of it.
WINTER (*to the men*). Off with you there! (*To* DOUGHTY.) The devil 's in your tongue!
Why must you sing of England? Follow me.
I think you would breed mutiny in heaven.
[*Exit.*

Cabin of Pelican.

DRAKE. *Enter* FLETCHER.

FLETCHER. I come as bidden. What may be your will?
DRAKE. Think you a man may serve two masters?
FLETCHER. Nay,
'T is not so writ.
DRAKE. Yet there are some I know
Would have me serve a dozen, and my Queen.
Shall I serve this man's doubt, and that man's fear?
Who bade these cowards follow me to sea?
And you, that are Christ's captain,— what of you?

Were I a man vowed wholly unto God,
I should have courage both of God and man;
And fear 's a malady of swift infection.
FLETCHER. I think my captain has been ill informed.
DRAKE. Ah, not so ill. Look at me, in the face;
A man's eyes may rest honest, though his soul
Be deeper damned than Judas. Thou art false!
False to thy faith, thy duty, and thy Prince!
Now, if thou hast no righteous fear of God —
By heaven! here stands a man you well may fear.
FLETCHER. Indeed I know not how I 've angered you.
DRAKE. You shall know soon. And — look not yet away —
You have hatched treason with her larger help
Of one that hath more courage. Spare him not
If you have hope to see another day.
What of your plans? I charge you, sir, be frank.
What has he told that you should fear to tell?
FLETCHER. We did but talk. Perchance I may have said
I do not love the sea, that some aboard
Would be well pleased to stand on English soil.
DRAKE. If you have any wisdom of this world,
A coward heart may save a foolish head.
I asked you what this traitor Doughty said,
You answer me with babble of yourself.
Speak out, or, by my honor, — no light oath, —
I shall so score you with the boatswain's lash
That Joseph's coat shall be a mock to yours.
FLETCHER. You would not — dare —
DRAKE. I think you know me not.
You have my orders. Is it yes, or no?
FLETCHER. I pray you, sir, consider what you ask.
No priest of God may, without deadly sin,

Tell what in penitence a troubled soul
Has in confession whispered. Ask me not.
DRAKE. If I do understand your words aright,
Save for the idle talk of idle men,
He hath said nought to you except of sin
Such as the best may in an hour of shame
Tell for the soul's relief. If this be so,
Nor I, nor any man, may question you.
FLETCHER. I do assure you that I spoke the truth.
DRAKE (*perplexed, walks to and fro. Turns suddenly, offering the hilt of his sword*). Swear it upon the cross-hilt of my sword.
Swear! (*Fletcher hesitates.*) As my God is dear, thou art more false
Than hell's worst devil. Ho! Without there! Ho!
FLETCHER. Nay, I will swear.
DRAKE. Too late. Without there! Ho!
Send me the boatswain's mate. Without there! Ho!
If I confess thee not, thou lying priest,
May I die old — die quiet in my bed.
Ho there! And quick!
FLETCHER. I pray you — let me think.
It may be that I did not understand.
It might be that he talked to me, a man,
As man to man. I think 't was even so.
DRAKE. Out with it — quickly! Speak! Out! Out with it!
FLETCHER. I think, he said, the purpose of this voyage
Was hid, and all of us are cheated men.
It seems, he said, that if the gentles here
Were of one mind, and stirred the crews to act,
We might see England and our homes again.
DRAKE. What more?

FLETCHER. Asked whom we'd get to bell the cat.—
And that the Queen your errand did not guess.
DRAKE. So! Said he that? Go on; your tale lacks wit.
FLETCHER. Also, that storms and ever-vexing winds
Did show God's will.
DRAKE. I think you trifle, sir.
Did he talk ever of my Lord of Burleigh?
FLETCHER. I fear to speak.
DRAKE. Fear rather to be silent.
Here lies the warrant of her Majesty:
'T is she, not I, commands.
FLETCHER. He seems to say
They would best serve my Lord of Burleigh's wish
Who marred this venture, ere the power of Spain
Was roused to open war. I can no more.
DRAKE. See that your memory fail not on the morrow!
Go thank the devil in your prayers to-night
For that your skin is whole. Begone! Begone!
[*Exit* FLETCHER.
Now know I what it costs a woman-prince
To keep her realm. The great should have no friends.

Enter VICARY, WINTER, *and* CHESTER.

DRAKE. Call all the captains and the officers.
The court shall meet to-morrow morn, at eight.
There shall be charges ready in due form;
You, all of you, shall hear the witnesses.
And, Winter,— we are far from England now,—
See that this trial be in all things fair,
As though each man of you, an ermined judge,
Sat in Westminster. Let no words of mine
Disturb the equities of patient judgment.

I would not that, when you and I are old,
Uneasy memories of too hasty action
Should haunt us with reproach. But have a care.
My duty knows no friend; be yours as ignorant.
Our fortunes and the honor of the Queen —
I should have said her honor and our fortunes —
Rest in your hands. See that my words be known.

WINTER. To all?

DRAKE. To all, sailors and gentlemen.

[*Exeunt the captains.*

WINTER, VICARY, *and* CHESTER *without.*

CHESTER. I 'm like a child that fain would run away
To 'scape a whipping.

WINTER. There are none of us
More sore at heart than Drake.

VICARY. I know of one.
I would a friend were dead ere break of day,
And all to-morrow's story left untold.
I think that I shall never laugh again.

[*They reach the deck.*

CHESTER (*pointing to the gibbet on the shore*).
It may be yon long-memoried counsellor
Made hard the admiral's heart.

VICARY. That might be so.
I wandered thither, yesterday, at eve,
And found a skull. Didst ever notice, Winter,
How this least mortal relic of a man
Does seem to smile? Hast ever talked with skulls?
They are courteous ever, and good listeners.
And never one of them, or man or maid,
That is not secret. There 's another virtue;

For what more honest and more chaste than death?
Now then, this skull that grins an hundred years —
Pray think how mighty must the jest have been;
And then, how transient are our living smiles.

WINTER. Ill-omened talk. A graver business waits.

VICARY. Give me an hour. I am not well to-day.
I will be with you very presently. [*Exit* VICARY.

Evening of the day of the trial and condemnation of DOUGHTY. *Time, sunset. Ashore on St. Julian's Island.*

WINTER. VICARY. DRAKE.

DRAKE *walking to and fro under the trees.*

WINTER (*coming up and walking beside him*). What orders are there?

DRAKE. See the prisoner,
And bid him choose the hour and the day.

WINTER. And for the manner of the execution?
The court said nothing; sir, it lies with you.
What is your pleasure?

DRAKE. Say my will, John Winter.
The gallows and the rope!

VICARY (*returning*). Must that be so?
'T is a dog's death, and not a gentleman's.

DRAKE. I have at home a very honest dog.

VICARY. Wilt pardon me if once again I plead?

DRAKE. Plead not with me. No plea the heart can bring
My own heart fails to urge.

WINTER. I made no plea.
The man I loved this morn for me is dead.

But there are those in England — far away —
Mother and sister —

DRAKE. Sir, you have my orders!
Henceforth no friends for me! This traitor dies,
As traitors all should die, a traitor's death.
The man's life judges him, not you, nor I.

VICARY. Indeed, the manner of a man's departure,
Whether upon a war-horse or an ass,
Doth little matter, as it seems to me,
If those he leaves feel not the fashion of it.
Now, many a year that rope will throttle me,
Who am no traitor, and who like not well
What treachery this man's nature moved him to.

DRAKE. It seems to me that good men's lives are spent
In paying debts another makes for them.
I have my share. Take you your portion, too.
Be just, I pray you, both to him and me.
Now, here 's a man that was my closest friend.
In Plymouth, ay, in London, ere we sailed,
Against the pledge myself had given the Queen,
He told the purpose of my voyage to Burleigh,
Pledging himself to wreck this enterprise,
Lest we should rouse these Spanish curs to bite.
That I do hold the warrant of the Queen
None but this traitor knew, and, knowing it,
Has set himself to brewing discontent,
Stirred mutiny amidst my crews, cast wide
The seed of discord, till obedience,
That is the feather on the shaft of duty,
Failed, and my very captains questioned me.
One man must die, or this great venture dies;
This man must die, or we go backward home,
Like mongrel dogs that fear a shaken stick.

WINTER. Yet none of us have asked his life of you.
DRAKE. I ask it of myself; shall ask it, sir,
Knowing how vain and pitiful my plea.
I have said nothing of the darker charge,
The covert hints, the whispering here and there
Of how my death might please my Lord of Burleigh,
And settle all these mutinous debates.
I think 't was but an idle use of speech;
I think he meant not it should come to aught.
WINTER. Nor I.
VICARY. Nor I. He hath confessed to all
Except this single charge. That he denied.
DRAKE. And now no more! And hope not I shall change.
Yet will I well consider all your words.
Rest you assured if there be any way
That both secures the safety of this voyage
And leaves this man to future punishment,
I shall not miss to find it.
WINTER. That were well.
I somewhat fear the temper of the men.
And these grave statesmen, closeted at home,
Have slight indulgence for the sterner needs
That whip us into what seems rash or cruel.
DRAKE. Ah, many a day 'twixt us and England lies,
And the peacemaker's blessing rests on time.
If death await me in the distant seas,
I shall not fear to meet a higher Judge.
If fortune smile upon our happy voyage,
No man in England that will dare to say
I served not well my country and my God;
The Queen will guard my honor as her own.
But, come what may, sirs, I shall act unmoved

By any dread of what the great may do,
Though we should prick this sullen Spain to war.
VICARY. Now, by St. George, could we but stir the Dons
To open fight! The Queen has many minds,
But when the blades are out, and Philip strikes,
As strike he will, these wary counsellors
Will lose her ear amid the clash of swords.
DRAKE. Pray God that I do live to see the day
When all the might of England takes the sea,
And we, that are the falcons of the deep,
Shall tear these cruel vultures, till our beaks
Drip red with Spanish blood!
VICARY. May I be there!
DRAKE (*gravely*). Trust me, we all shall live to see that hour.
God gives us moments when the years to come
Lie easily open like a much-read book.
Oppressed with weight of care, in these last days
I seem to see beyond this bitter time.
We shall so carry us in yon Rome-locked seas
That all the heart of England shall be glad,
And the brown mothers of these priest-led Dons
Shall scare unruly children with my name.
And then, and then, I see a nobler hour.
A day of mightier battle, when their fleets
Shall fly in terror from our English guns,
And through the long hereafter we shall sail
Unquestioned lords of all the watery waste.
Oh, 't was a noble dream!
VICARY. But what were life
Without the splendid prophecy of dreams?
DRAKE. At least, a moment they have given release

From sadder thought of that which has to be.
The night is falling. Get we now aboard.
To-morrow you shall have my final judgment.

A cabin in the Pelican. Early morning. The day after the trial and condemnation of DOUGHTY.

DOUGHTY. *Enter* WINTER.

DOUGHTY. Is there an hour set? When shall it be?
WINTER. That rests with you. Alas, too well you know
That, being charged with certain grave offences,
Of which, to our great grief, you are not cleared,
The court decreed your death. Now, I am come
To offer you thus much of grace —
DOUGHTY. As what?
WINTER. Either to be at morning left ashore,
Or to be held till, at convenient time,
A ship may carry you to England, there
To answer for your deeds the Lords in Council;
Or will you take to be here done to death
As runs our sentence?
DOUGHTY. Would I had no choice.
That 's a strange riddle! Here be caskets three.
'T is like the story in the Venice tale.
Thank Francis Drake for me. I 'll think upon it.
And send me Leonard Vicary with good speed.
WINTER. Is there aught else a man may do for you?
DOUGHTY. Yes, come no more until I send for you.
WINTER. Have I in anything offended you?
DOUGHTY. No, you have too much loved me; that is all.
The sting lies there.

WINTER. I do not understand.
DOUGHTY. And I too well. Wilt send me Vicary?
WINTER (*aside*). As strange a monitor for a mortal hour
As e'er a sick life's fancy hit upon. [*Exit.*
DOUGHTY (*alone*). This is a sad disguise of clemency.
Death seemed a natural and safe conclusion.
As one serenely bound upon a voyage,
I had turned my back on all I did hold dear,
And looked no more to land. I think, indeed,
Almost the very touch and sound of life
Seemed fading, as when sleep comes wholesomely.
Now I am in the wakened world again.
And all the blissful company of youth,
Love, friendship, hope, the mere esteem of men,
Beckon, and mock me like to sunlit fields
Seen from the wave-crests where a swimmer strives,
Struck hither, thither, by uneasy seas.
Christ to my help! Ah, counsel always best.

How should I bide upon these heathen shores?
Knowing how frail I be, how strong a thing
Is the contagion of base men's customs.
Alas! alas! I ever have been one
That wore the color of the hour's friend.
What! risk my soul, that hath an endless date,
For days or years of life? That may not be.

What! home to England? I, a tainted man;
That 's the gold casket where temptation lies.
There is no unconsidered blade of grass,
No little daisy, and no violet brief,
That does not hurt me with its sweet appeal.
[*Walks to and fro.*

I mind me of an evening — O my God!
No! That way anguish waits. I 'll none of that.
Twice, in my dreams last night, I saw her come;
And twice she cried, *" First Honor, and then love!"*
And came no more. O Jesu, hear my prayer,
And let me never in that other world
Meet the sad verdict of those troubled eyes
I kissed to tears the day we sailed away.

Enter VICARY.

You are most welcome; sit beside me here.
I found my sentence in a woman's eyes.
VICARY. I understand.
DOUGHTY. How ever apt you are;
That took my fancy always. Now, it saves
The turning of a dagger in a wound.
I have chosen death.
VICARY. And chosen well, I think.
There was not one of us that said not so;
Not one but wishes life were possible.
DOUGHTY. Set that aside. It is not possible.
And put no strain upon your natural self
To be another than the man you are.
Do you remember once a thing you said,—
How for the wise the soul has chapels four?
One, that I name not. One, a home of tears.
One, the grave shrine of high philosophy.
And one, where all the saints are jesters gay.
Smile on me when I die. In that dim world
I am assured men laugh, as well they may,
To see this ant-heap stirred. Oh, I shall look
To see you smile.

VICARY. I pray you talk not thus.

DOUGHTY. And wherefore not? A moment, only one,
The thought of England troubled my decision;
But that is over. Yet, a word of home.
There is a maid in Devon — (*hesitates.*) Pardon me.
When, by God's grace, you see her, as you must,
Tell her I loved her well — and what beside
I leave to you. I shall not hear the tale.
Be gentle in the way of your report.
Ah me! by every cross a woman kneels;
I doubt not, Leonard, that some Syrian girl
Sobbed where the thief hung dying. Now, good-by!
Go! and remember — I shall hold you to it.

[*Exit* VICARY.

Oft when the tides of life were at their full,
I have sat wondering what the ebb would be,
And what that tideless moment men call death.
I think it strange as nears the coming hour,
I willingly would fetch it yet more near.

VICARY (*without, as he goes on deck*). He asks a smile where nature proffers tears.
I have laughed tears before, and may again.
Here dies a man who, like that heir of Lynne,
Has madly squandered honor, friendship, love,
And hath no refuge save the dismal rope.
Shall that bring other fortunes than he spent?
Ah me! I loved him well,— and I must smile —
That will seem strange to men. I sometimes wish
I could feel sure that Christ did ever smile.

Enter DRAKE.

DRAKE. I come to hear thy choice.

DOUGHTY. My choice is made.

Death, and no long delay. And be not grieved;
You will — ah, well I know you — feel the hurt.
Were you to say, "Take life, take hope again,
Take back command," and bid me mend my ways,
The mercy were but vanity of kindness.
Never could I be other than I am;
Yet think of me as but the minute's traitor.
You have been merciful. 'T is I am stern.
Not you, but I, decree that I shall die.
A sudden weariness of life is mine;
Let me depart in peace —

DRAKE. Must it be so?
Another court may clear you.

DOUGHTY. Urge me not.
Another court! There is but one high court
May clear my soul of guilt. I go to God.
There shall be witnesses you cannot call.
Let this suffice. No man can move me now;
And rest assured I never loved you more.

DRAKE. I thank you. Now, what else?

DOUGHTY. I choose to die.
Go we ashore at noon, and eat at table,
Like gentlemen who speed a parting friend
Upon a pleasant and a certain voyage:
And I would share with you the bread of God. [*Pauses.*
There is but one thing more —

DRAKE. Speak! Oh, my God!
Except — except mere life, there is no thing
I would not give you; yea, to my own life.

DOUGHTY. You cannot think that I would ask my life?

DRAKE. Pardon, sweet gentleman, and sweeter friend.

DOUGHTY. There is a maid in Devon — oh, Frank Drake!

It must not be the gibbet and the rope!
The axe and block, men say, cure all disgrace.
DRAKE. So shall it be.
DOUGHTY. I knew you not unkind.
I pray you leave me now. God prosper you.
You cannot know how kind a thing is death.

Island of St. Julian. Table spread at noon, under the trees. DRAKE *seated with* DOUGHTY *and other officers. In the background, a block, with the headsman, sailors, and others.*

VICARY *and* WINTER *approach the table.*

VICARY. Didst hear, John Winter, what he said to him?
WINTER. I had but come ashore. What said he, Leonard?
VICARY. First, he would have the admiral take the bread;
Then, when in turn the priest did come to him,
He said, "I would another man than you
Were here to give me of this bread of God.
Yet, as for this dear body of my Lord,
A pearl that's carried in a robber's pouch
Doth lose no lustre;" and with no more words
Took of the sacrament; and so to table.

[*They approach sadly and in silence.*

DOUGHTY (*looking up*). Come, come, I 'll none of this!
Here are bent brows;
You go not thus to battle. Shall one death
Disturb our appetites and spoil our mirth?

Am I not host? They 'll not be bid again
Who come not merry. (*Aside to* VICARY.) See you fail me not.
Some men ask prayers. I only ask a smile.
(*Aloud.*) Come, gentlemen, I put this hardship on you.
There might be many questions, much to say.

DRAKE. I shall sit here forever, if you will,
But talk I cannot.

DOUGHTY. Nay, but that is strange.
'T is the glad privilege of the gentle-born
To see in death an honest creditor,
That any day may ask the debt of life.
What! must I make the talk? That 's naughty manners.
I never was a happier man than now.
There 's few among you shall have choice of deaths.
And you, Frank Drake,— if God should bid elect —
What way to death wouldst choose?

DRAKE. I do not know —
Not in my bed, please God.

DOUGHTY. Speak for him, Leonard.
I think my friend has shed his wits to-day.
Once he was readier —

VICARY. Were I Francis Drake,
When waves are wild and fly the bolts of war,
And timbers crash, and decks are bloody red,
Then would I pass, slain by my loving sea,
As died the hurt Greek by a friendly sword.

DOUGHTY. Full bravely answered. Winter, what of you?

WINTER. As God may will. I have no other thought.

DOUGHTY (*to* VICARY). And what, dear jester, Leonard, what of you?

VICARY. Oh, between kisses, of a morn of May,

Or in the merriest moment of a fight,
When blades are out, and the brave Dons stand fast —
Upon my soul, I can no more of this,
You ask too much of man. I can no more!

[*Leaves the table.*

DOUGHTY. Now, here's a dull companion. Go not yet —
Or go not far, and let not sorrow cheat me.

VICARY. Oh, I shall smile. Rest you assured of that.

[*Moves away.*

DOUGHTY. I thought he had been made of sterner stuff.
There's a too gentle jester. (*To* DRAKE.) Think you, Frank,
That we shall meet in heaven?

DRAKE. Such is my trust.

[*They talk in whispers.*

DOUGHTY (*aloud*). The wind lies fair to south. Friends, gentles, all,
It were not well to lose a prospering hour.
God send you kindly gales and gallant ventures!
Strike hard for me, John Winter! When the Dons
Are thick about you and the fight goes ill,
Cry, This is for remembrance! This, and this!
And you, dear Leonard, when the feast is gay
Drink double for your friend. Be sure my lips
Shall share with yours the laughter and the cup.

[*Rises, as do all.*

Now, then: The Queen and England! (*Drinks.*) (*To* DRAKE.) Take my love.
Still let me live a friendly memory —
Come with me.

DRAKE. No, I cannot, cannot come!

[*Moves away.*

DOUGHTY (*To* VICARY, *as they walk to the block.*)
What, not a smile? Not one? That's better, Leonard,
Albeit of a rather sickly sort.
Come hither, Francis Drake. (DRAKE *approaches.*)
Good-by, dear friend.
[*Kisses him on both cheeks. Kneels, and the axe falls.*
VICARY. God rest this soul!
WINTER. Amen!
DRAKE. Christ comfort me!

PHILIP VERNON

THE INN

JULY 21, 1588

WHEN Bess was queen, and the Bishop of Rome and the King of Spain were troubling our England, the cowls were many in the land, and knew how to pull the lamb-skins well around them.

One of these wolves, of a summer morning, walked, halting a little, to and fro under the great oaks between the Vernon Arms and the road. His sheep's clothing was a burgher's gray hose and doublet; but he was not right, red English, having of late come out of Spain, yellow-cheeked and lean. He looked down the highway to the bridge, and then with his eyes followed the river curves to the sea, whence, he smiled to think, the great Armada would come, in time to help certain wicked schemes, and set the cowls again in high places. Then, less pleased, he cast looks at a gallant in blue with yellow points, who sat at a table a little way from the inn. This gentle had a good leg and was high-colored and young. At times

he drummed on the table, or uneasily cast down his cap, and once half drew his sword, then presently, as if impatient, drove it back into its sheath. But whether he yawned or sat quiet in thought, Hugh Langmayde, the priest in gray, lost naught of what he did; and at last, still watching the gallant, he fell to open talk with himself after this fashion:

"Soon shall you stretch those sturdy limbs, my boy,
And for your rapier find a brave employ.
I am too old, too feeble,— you alone
Shall do this sacred errand of our Lord,
Avenge his murdered saints, and from her throne
Cast down this Jezebel, of men abhorred.
I thought not, when I taught thy youth to know
One creed, one king, and questionless to go
Where Church or King decreed, that you and I,
As if we were but one, like head and hand,
Should free this England which doth fettered lie,
And give to God another Christian land.

"What if my weapon fail me? Restless grown,
He asks now this, now that, would have me own
My purpose,— hath the waywardness of youth,—
Is wilful, petulant, or grave. In truth,
It shall mean little when he comes to learn
What splendid bribe an eager hand may earn,
And at my will he goes my way to win
God's gold or this world's guerdon. Is it sin
To shudder thinking death may be his lot?
My task were easier if he loved me not.
God's priest should die unloved; should have no fears,
Live without memories, and know not tears."

Herewith the young gallant, Philip Vernon by name, calls out to a servant of the inn:

"Fetch me some ale, good fellow. Set it here —
Two brimming tankards. See 't is cool and clear.
How fresh the air! I like this breezy shade
The better since by sunshine it is made.
Our Spanish saying aptly hits my mark:
Soar with the hawk,
Sing with the lark;
Eyes for the sunlight,
Lips for the dark.
St. James! I 'm weary of my unused self,
Left like a dull book on a dusty shelf.
I hate this corner life! Now, by the Cid!
I must be more discreet. I 'm sternly bid
To hide my name because my name may lead —
I know not why — to questions that exceed
Our skill to answer fitly.— Master Hugh,
Come taste with me our host's last autumn brew."

Hearing his call, the priest, smiling, sits down beside the young man he had been gravely watching; and taking of the ale,— but with a wry face, for in Spain he had learned dislike of such honest English drink,— he lays a hand on the lad's knee, and says to him:

"What troubles you, my Philip?"

PHILIP VERNON. We have strayed
Now here, now there, in England, while you played
A game, good Father, somewhat like the chess
Our prior loved. You smile on me,— my guess

Has hit the butt? Here moves a pawn, and there,
Haply, a bishop. Then the queen —

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Beware!
You chatter lightly, call me "Father"— try
To lose the habit; that way dangers lie.
One careless word, and rack and axe or rope
Await us; and so dies the saintliest hope
This misruled kingdom knows. To die were gain
For me; and yet God's work, the Church, our Spain,
The king, our master, own me till this strife
With evil ends. Be patient!

PHILIP VERNON. Oh, this life
Of masquerade, and lies, and daily fear
Of what I know not, wearies me!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Not here
The time or place for truant tongues. Speak low,
Or, better, change the talk.

PHILIP VERNON. Soon I must know.

The priest, emptying his tankard and pushing it from him, looks askance at his companion, and therewith says, as if to quiet his mind with other thought:

"Poor stuff is this beside our convent wine.
You need but squeeze the ripeness of the vine
To drain its reddest blood: — torment the grains
God meant for bread, and lo! you get for pains
This boorish drink."

And now is heard a quick rattle of horse-hoofs, and a score of gentles come down the road at speed. Some

are armed, and more are clad in gay doublets, with plumes unmeet for riding — sign of haste, perchance. Red, blue, and purple, with glint of steel, flash through the yellow dust, aglow with the sun of noon, as the riders go by the inn. But three draw rein beneath the oaks; whereon this Philip Vernon leaps up, oversetting a flagon of good ale, and crying:

"Look, look, ye saints! That roan,
And that dark chestnut,— his who rode alone,—
Are worth a prince's ransom! See — they stay
To breathe their horses. He with plume of gray
Hath the best seat. Red Doublet 's all untrussed:
He must have ridden hard; and, see — the dust!
Why ride they thus?"

As he speaks the servants and landlord come hastily forth from the inn.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Hush! Out comes all the hive.
You shall know shortly.

RED DOUBLET. Ho! are none alive?
The Armada 's off the Lizard. Look aright
That all your headland beacons blaze to-night!
These be Lord Howard's orders. Ho, there, quick!
Ale, ale — three flagons!

GRAY PLUME. Wine, wine! I am sick
With dusty thirst.

RED DOUBLET. And I could drink a tun.

As they sit in the saddle, the fair maid of the inn brings to each his flagon of ale.

ONE ARMED IN A CUIRASS. Keep me some kisses.

RED DOUBLET. I shall ask but one.

MAID. Oh, my good lords, there shall not lack a prayer
From one poor wench that God your lives will spare.
Alas! alas! I 'm mightily afraid
Scarce will be left a man to kiss a maid!
This dreadful war! —

GRAY PLUME. Now, by the gods! but *he*
Will truly have his hands full.— This for thee!
— The admiral rides hard, and we must sup
Aboard the ships.— Thanks for the stirrup-cup.

A hand on the bridle,
A cup of good sack;
Pray keep those lips idle
Until I come back.

RED DOUBLET.
Here 's a curse on Romish rats!
Here 's good luck to English cats!

Then he who wore a cuirass, as they ride away, sings lustily:

"'T is always pleasant weather
In the company of wine;
And the mile-stones run together,
And the roughest road is fine,
In the company of wine.
For no man owes a shilling,
And all the land is thine.
And every lip is willing,
In the company of wine."

LANDLORD. God keep our England merry!

PHILIP VERNON. Who be they
Who ride so hotly at full noon of day?

LANDLORD. Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral,
A lover of the Pope, and yet withal
A sturdy gentle, English to the core,
And hates a Spaniard. What can one say more?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Where rides he now?

LANDLORD. To Plymouth Port. The coast
Is all astir. The great Armada's host
Is come at last. God help our little fleet!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. God help the right and England!

LANDLORD. Aye.

PHILIP VERNON. Retreat
Could scarce fly swifter than these gallants ride.
I would, good Father, I were at their side.

Hereon Hugh Langmayde and Philip together leave the inn and highroad, and as they slowly climb a little hill, and begin to enter into a wood of oak, the priest makes this answer to the lad's vexation of spirit:

"Peace, boy! Thy ways are in a nobler path.
They ride to death. Already God's stern wrath
Is gathering for their ruin on the seas.
Come with me, Philip. There among the trees
Talk will be safer. Come,— the hour of fate
Is near at hand. You shall no longer wait
To hear the tale I ofttimes promised you

When, the day's lessons done, at fall of dew
Above Grenada from the convent wall
We watched the paling gold of evening crawl
From peak to peak, while o'er the Vega's plain
The dusking shadows marched. Thus, not in vain,
When all the lower world is dim and gray,
God sets the promise of another day
On those his Church has taught to live above
Man's mist of passions — aye, and earthly love."

THE CHASE

As they move through the wood the priest pauses at last where from a hillside the more open forest commands a broad view of green fields, the river with hills beyond, and to left the distant sea.

PHILIP VERNON. How still it is, how full of peace, how far
From the rude hurry and alarm of war!
See what an airy build the mountains show
When over them the broad-winged shadows go.
A land to love!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Ay, and a land to serve
With noble deeds that may indeed deserve
This splendid recompense. A land to win
Back from its damnèd covenant with sin.
Sit here, my son. Once this great fallen tree
Looked o'er the land, and could no equal see.
Lord of the forest, underneath its shade
The wanderer rested. Here both man and maid
Found shelter. High among its eaves

The birds sang hymns which God alone had taught,
Or nested peaceful in its spreading leaves,
Where sun and rain His mystic wonders wrought.

PHILIP VERNON. I see not clearly, Father —

HUGH LANGMAYDE. No, my son,
A nation wandered from the fold, undone,
Sunk in delusion, waits full many a year —
Waits for God's hour to read that riddle clear.
Once, in this land, the Church spread broad and high
The mighty leafage of her destiny —
Why mince my meaning? Lo! a brutal king
Struck, and the splendid trunk lies moldering.

PHILIP VERNON. And still I see not wherefore —

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Ah! The rest
Attends your hearing. Soon this land oppressed
Shall know deliverance. O'er yon waiting sea
Great Philip's viceroy comes. To you, to me,
God grants on land as sure a victory.
And now, my Philip, hear me to an end.
In happier times I shall be glad to mend
My broken story of your life. To-day
Accept a briefer tale. I have grown gray
Now many years, since through these woods I fled,
A hunted priest, this land where God seemed dead.
Pursuit was hot; my boat lay off the shore;
A bullet caught me as I plunged; a score
Flew over. Still this crippled leg, my lad,
Keeps me a memory not wholly sad;
For, as I bleeding strove, a boy's white face
Rose in a black wave's hollow. By God's grace

I clutched your hand, my son. The boat's crew caught
The pair of us, half-drowned; and so God wrought
This great deliverance. I think the tide
Trapped you at play on yonder sands. I tried
To set you safe upon the coast. 'T was vain;
I could not do the thing I would. In Spain
The fevered life I scarce had hope to save
Came back as if new-born, as if the grave
That was so near had taken half away
Your boyhood's recollections. Need I say
Love to my heart came easily? I yearned
To win the love my double help had earned.

PHILIP VERNON.

You have it in full measure. Now at last
I shall know all. Is this to end that past
Of doubts, and dreams, and fears? Before my eyes,
Lo! as you speak, faint memories arise.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Trust them not wholly.

PHILIP VERNON. I 've a vision wild
Of ravening seas; and them beyond, a child,
I live again glad days. I seem indeed
Like one who, waking from a dream, has need
To piece it out with thinking. Who is he —
A stately gentleman, I strive to see,
And cannot clearly, though he smiles? Stay, stay!
Was that my father? As you love me, say!
Was it my father? Ah! so much is dim;
But that has substance. Let me go to him —
Yes, you and me together. I can hear
How he will thank you.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Wherefore should I fear
To know at last if I have truly read
The soul I trained?

PHILIP VERNON. Why hesitate? You dread
To speak some truth!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. You do not ask to know
Your name and station?

PHILIP VERNON. Let that matter go.
Where is my father?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Can I give the dead?

PHILIP VERNON. Dead! And how long ago?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Two years, 't is said.

PHILIP VERNON. Dead! Two years dead! Know you
the hour, the day?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. I know them not.

PHILIP VERNON. And I may have been gay,
And laughed, or diced, the hour he passed away!

As he ceases, the priest, who has watched him moodily, touches his arm as if in appeal, whereupon the young man exclaims:

"Nay, do not speak. How very often here
He must have wandered, and when death drew near
Thought of this son in heaven! Some might fear
To cheat the living and the dead. Despair

Seems but a thing of earth. How could you dare
To cast its shadow on a world beyond!"

HUGH LANGMAYDE.

My more than child, ah, when this earthly bond
Of love is severed, surely God has power
To heal the sorrows of earth's little hour.

As if not hearing the priest, and with yet more of anger, the younger man continues:

"My God! Those years of youth when I in Spain,
And he in England, took our ignorant pain
To God, and never knew what statecraft stole
Of nature's honest store! You took the whole —
All, all of love two lives had! By my soul,
I think that you must see forevermore
A gray-haired man who walks beside the shore,
And of the silent ocean asks his dead!"

HUGH LANGMAYDE. You wrong me, Philip.

PHILIP VERNON. No, I should have fled —
Oh, long ago — had I known all, but now
'T is past the cure of word or deed. Ah, how —
How could you hurt me thus?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. I did God's will —
His, and the king's.

PHILIP VERNON. The king's! Could he fulfil
What home and father would have given?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. My son,
Pray you consider. Could I aught have done
Against the king's command? I did not dare.

What lack you else the gentle-born should bear?
Head, hand, and eye have had such anxious care
As only Spain can give. What English peer
Has court or camp trained better? Do you fear
To cross a sword with any? Who, I ask,
Can match you mounted? Mine the graver task
To see you lack not learning. Pause, reflect;
Not without prayer I acted. You suspect
Some treason? — Philip, where you stand to-day
The soil is yours. That castle old and gray,
The river's sweep, hill, forest, town, and lake,
In God's good time are yours, my son, to take.
See where yon eagle o'er the mountain soars!
Scarce can he look beyond what land is yours.
Set foot in stirrup, draw your father's sword:
A thousand men will follow you, my lord!
Low at your word will bow that tavern churl,
And I shall bid you welcome, my Lord Earl!

PHILIP VERNON. Earl! Lord! These manors mine?
You could not jest?

HUGH LANGMAYDE.
Not I, my lord; you match with England's best.
The proofs that give you these the Church will guard
Till one proud day of triumph and reward.

PHILIP VERNON.
'T is a strange tale, and sad as it is strange.
I would a braver love had bid you change
Those home-reft years I have forever lost.
You should have counted well the cruel cost,
And saved my life this pain. Oh, bitter day!

Vexed with a convent life, made next to play
A page's part, or squire's, left to say
I knew not who I was, or high or base,
Until, worn out, I smote a snarling face
That mocked my birth as knowing some disgrace;
For text of thought he got a rapier thrust.
Alas! I gave you all my boyhood's trust,
And thus you used it!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Philip, that same breath
With which you question me, I gave; the death
From which I saved you set a silent grave
Between the lost life and the life I gave.
You have a father. Have I seemed to be
Less than a father?

PHILIP VERNON. None were that to me.
I have been hurt enough: 't were well to spare
These convent subtleties. In England fair
I tread where men are free, breathe lighter air.
Much have I learned no Spanish cloister taught,
More have I heard that Spain had never thought.

HUGH LANGMAYDE.
Ill have you heard. Not all my tale is told.
Let but the Church her lifting hand withhold,
And you are lost! Be her true son, be bold,
And these broad lands are yours to win when she
Who rules this kingdom dies. For you, for me,
The path lies straight. But yestermorn in prayer
I asked of God a sign, and found it where
At close of eve I sat and saw the sun
Set in a sea of blood ere day was done —
A cloud-born cross above. Oh, dark shall be

The Church's reckoning when yon loathing sea
Its unrepentant dead spits on the shore,
And the long torment of the galley's oar
Shall chain the souls that live! What seek you more?

PHILIP VERNON.

What more indeed! I went your way, not mine,
Knew but one prince, sought never to divine
Your reasons, nor the policy of State
That without explanation ruled my fate.
Answer my manhood outright! Be more true
To one who loves you! Give me all love's due.
What keeps us here? I will not be denied.
An English noble! Wherefore should I bide
Upon your will my father's lands to claim
While pope and king play out a doubtful game?

HUGH LANGMAYDE.

You ask untimely. Shall the arrow know
The stern commission of the bended bow?
In God's good time —

PHILIP VERNON. The hour that is, is good;
No other answers. Ah, I think you should
Have known me better. Speak! By good St. James,
I 'm very weary of these priestly games!
I take it that, as well as one can see
Through this dim, wordy haze of mystery,
I rest mere Philip Vernon until death
Strikes with your hand, or mine, Elizabeth.
Is that your meaning, Father? If 't is so,
We part to-day. Oh, I must clearly know
What the cowl's caution hid from me. Be frank,

As you were wont. Give me new cause to thank
The man within the priest.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Go, if you will.
If God and king, my danger, and these years
Of love lack force to teach you duty still,
Go! Leave me here to peril and to tears.

PHILIP VERNON.
Love is not bondage; and, for that harsh king,
I owe him hate alone.— Oh, do not wring
My heart with more of grief! Tell me the tale
Of who and what I am. There cannot fail
To be some light, some guidance, some poor path
Out of this mystery!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. The Lord's just wrath
Will punish this revolt.

PHILIP VERNON. I do not change
As shifts the weather-vane! Hold you it strange
I should learn English ways? — but yesterday
I fell to talking with a gallant gay —
Upon my soul, a rare, sweet gentle he,
Hidalgo born, a flower of chivalry,
Simple and courteous, melancholic now,
And now as merry as a May-day queen,
With chat of court and camp and State, a brow
Just helmet-dinted, o'er an eye serene
That made swift capture of my inward thought
Before a word my tardy tongue had wrought.
Sir Philip Sidney he! We talked full long
Of Spain and England, of what cruel wrong
My jailor Philip did, and soon we passed

To speak of Spain's Armada. "Now," at last,
"Thank God for war!" he cried. "The die is cast!
And you, a gentleman, young sir,"— to me,—
"Sit in a tavern sad, while history
Is in the mighty making." Then he quaffed
A cup of wine. "Is it a woman?"— laughed
Because, shame-flushed, I, angry, answered not.
"Pardon," he added. "Cast the iron lot
Of war, and take with us the splendid chance.
God and the Queen, a sword, a horse, a lance!
Your name, fair sir?" I could but hang my head.
What could I answer? "I have none," I said.
— You bade me hide it, you were well obeyed.
He touched my shoulder kindly: "Many a man
Has found a proud name where the red blood ran.
Aimless and nameless? Get you aim and name
Where two great nations play war's royal game.
Come with me on the morrow."

HUGH LANGMAYDE. And you cried,
Vade Sathanas!

PHILIP VERNON. Nay, I naught replied,
Or scarce a word. By Heaven, I had been right
To follow loyally that gallant knight
Where England calls her sons!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. What, must I fail
For this boy-folly? — You shall hear the tale —
Ay, all of it a tender heart withheld
To give more gently in the happier hour
God's victory will bring. Ah, then dispelled
Were half its anguish!

PHILIP VERNON. Speak! I have the power
To bear life's very worst.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Is this the lad
I saved from death? Defiant, reckless, mad,
You ask you know not what.

PHILIP VERNON. But I will know,
And on the minute, or by Heaven! I go
To claim what rights are mine.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Take then the fate
That bides for him who does not know to wait
On God's maturing hour. Alas, poor fool!
Art nameless? Yes! This, on my oath to rule
A froward nature, by the rood I swear!
Didst hear? — the rood! Thou art a bastard born!
Art fitly answered? Didst thou think to dare
To cross my purpose,— thou, a child of scorn!

PHILIP VERNON.
What fool's device is this? A little while
I was my lord, am now a bastard vile.
Another man this pleasant tale should rue
All the brief life I 'd leave him.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Still, 't is true.

PHILIP VERNON. By Heaven, thou liest!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Have I ever lied?

PHILIP VERNON. God knows, not I.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. I should have naught replied.
A priest, and lie! It seems a challenge cheap.

Tears! — that is wiser. Oh, I did but keep
My better tidings back. Alas, no friend
Could hide this ill news long, or know to mend
A wrong of birth; but when, in God's good time,
Your arm has freed a land, and yonder chime
Rings in our king, rings out this fated Queen,
Then she who owns this broad domain has seen
Her last of greatness.

PHILIP VERNON. Who?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Your cousin,— she,
Your father's heir, your steward now till we
Win Philip's battle, and his potent hand
Strikes from your shield the bastard's shameful band,
Gives all I promised, honor, wealth, and place,—
All that men covet in this earthly race.
Go! I have done. Think on it for the week
We linger here. Be prudent, slow to speak,
Watchful and wise. God's hand is on the helm,
And I, the Church, the King, this woeful realm,
Will need your help.

PHILIP VERNON. I would that I could doubt
One who has never lied. I stand without
The pale of honor and the hopes of men,
A nameless creature, bred to turn again
And rend the race that gave me, with this stain,
Intrepid honor, proud desires,— in fine,
The manly virtues of a noble line.
Poor useless jewels! all in vain their worth.
I had been happier made of meaner earth.

HUGH LANGMAYDE.

Nay, nay; but that 's not so. Land, title, place,
Are yours to gain when, by God's helping grace,
That Spanish dagger at your side strikes quick.
Oh, I can see — can *see* this heretic
Roll bloody in the dust, and hear the land
Ring joy from spire to spire!

PHILIP VERNON. I understand
At last too well. No more for me the prayer
To be delivered from temptation's snare.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Sad words, my son!

PHILIP VERNON. Yet heed them well: they say
The malice of dishonor. If I prey
Like maggots on the carcass whose decay
Begot my baseness, who shall blame the banned?
What would'st thou of me? Is it head or hand?

HUGH LANGMAYDE.

How beautiful the evening is! Behold
The dim, green meadows take the dewy gold,
While in the hollows little pools of mist
Are gathering slowly where the cattle list
The milky summons of the twilight horn.
Look! 'T is your heritage! Some men are born
Ignobly great; some in one matchless hour
Scale at a bound the heights of human power.

PHILIP VERNON.

A bastard lord! Not I! Awhile ago
You took from life its beauty and its glow.
How could you mock my fancies with a tale

Such as my boyhood dreamed, and let it fail
In such a slough of shame? Love, honor, hope —
You took them all, and offer now a rope!
'T is kind! I was a man, and you have made
A fiend of whom you well might be afraid
If you had lied.— You could not.— Take me! Use
My strength, my will, my hate, as you may choose.

HUGH LANGMAYDE. There 's time to think.

PHILIP VERNON. Not I! What next?

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Wilt swear?

PHILIP VERNON.
Ay, for an oath is only empty air.
Once 't was a thing to spend a life for. I
Am but a hireling now mere gold may buy,
Or any Judas coin.

As Philip speaks he makes a move as if to go, but, of a sudden returning, looks the priest steadily in the face, and with a troubled countenance says to him:

"One word to close
An hour the damned might pity. I suppose —
— There was a mother —
— Well?"

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Long, long ago
Your mother died.

PHILIP VERNON. 'T is all I care to know.
Loved, sinned, and died! May God's sweet pity rest

Upon the shameless woman from whose breast
I drew the milk of sorrows!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Sleep and prayer
Will bring you peace, yet leave you power to dare
A deed with which the world shall ring. Good-night.
In three days I return again. To right
Your pathway lies toward the inn. Invite
No comment. Guard yourself. Good-night.

As the priest moves away Philip Vernon replies tardily:

"Good-night.
What night is good to me? Alas, what day?"

THE GARDEN

Walking slowly away, Philip Vernon takes his sadness deeper into the woods, and wandering far, comes at last to a great garden wall. There he stays awhile, until sweet odors, rising, seem to call him; and with no more thought of what may lie beyond, he leaps the wall, and stands amid the flowers, waist-deep in hollyhock and golden plume.

"I wonder somewhat was my life then gay
When here I chased the butterflies, and trod
These garden lanes, or rolled upon the sod,
A thoughtless boy? I 'll take, for memory's sake,
One rose of home."

Hither into the garden at this moment comes Lord Francis Grey, in red velvet, with a face aflame to match.

Seeing this gallant across a hedge of sweet-peas, he slips the collar of his humor and sets it on to bite in this wise:

"Ho! Who are you who break
These castle bounds at will? Ho there! Take heed!
Didst hear me?"

PHILIP VERNON. Yes. Your words, I think, exceed
The owner's power to back his tongue at need.

LORD GREY.
My cousin is the chancellor's ward; none dare
Avenge an insult here.

PHILIP VERNON. Then wiser 't were
To keep the tongue in ward. You question one
That hath lost touch of fear beneath the sun.
The chancellor? What care I? Your cousin? Mine?
Now, why not mine? Suppose, to cap the jest,
We fight for cousinship: who wins is best.
And is she fair, this woman? Doth her talk,
Like thine, lack breeding? This smooth garden walk
Is broad enough to serve us. Draw, on guard!
And let my rapier teach your tongue such ward
As hasty manners lack.

LORD GREY. Have then your will!
Or mad or foolish, you 're a man to kill!
Yet to cross blades with one unknown or base —

PHILIP VERNON.
Base! By my soul! Were you his very Grace,
This same lord chancellor, his mighty face
Should know my glove!

Lord Grey, having already drawn his sword, advances and lunges smartly at Philip, at the same time crying out:

"By Heaven, you are dead!"

PHILIP VERNON.

A thing, observe, less easily done than said.
A step more near, a trifle yet more quick,
And you had boasted shrewdly. Oh, the trick
Is stale. In Spain we lunge this wise, and then
A thrust in tierce — Well parried! — good, again!
I take it firmly close to hilt; the wrist
Well up; then deftly, with this cunning twist,
Give point. Your sword-arm? By the Cid, 't is sad!
That stops the sport.

LORD GREY. 'T is not so very bad
But that a day will cure it.

At this he sees men break through the shrubbery and come running toward them, whereon he says to Philip:

"Get you gone!
There, by the terrace, and across the lawn."

PHILIP VERNON. And wherefore?

LORD GREY. Hasten, leap the brook and fly!

As Philip stands with no mind to escape, the steward and many servants gather around them.

STEWARD.

What means this brawl? My lady asks, not I.

LORD GREY.

'T is but a trifle. Come with me. The blame
I shall stand father to. This way. The dame? —

STEWARD. Is in the eastern gallery.

LORD GREY. Best it were
You tarry here awhile. My cousin fair
Has many humors: which shall be our share
No man has skill to tell. Her No, or Yes,
A hundred years' experience could not guess.

With these words Lord Grey leaves Philip Vernon at the entrance of the castle, where, with sudden interest in his face, he looks about him, and at last says:

"How most familiar 't is! There the great hall,
The windowed gallery, and on the wall
The gray stone dial. There the poplars tall.
Now, as I live, the willows and the brook!
And there my father sat the while I took
His great horse o'er it — much I feared the leap.
How memory wakens as if from a sleep!
The stair! Sir Lancelot's armor! That brave lance
Lord Arthur carried to the wars in France.
One night I touched it — on the floor it crashed,
And the fierce strife of Crécy round me clashed
With din of spear and steel, and shock and blow,
And clang of knights that set my heart aglow."

A SERVANT.

My lady bids me say for her, Sir Knight,
She waits you in the gallery. Here, to right.

Philip Vernon enters the picture-gallery, and sees at the far end Elizabeth Vernon speaking with Lord Grey.

LORD GREY. The errant knight waits yonder.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Let him wait;
'T is a man's business. Now, I pray you, state
What means this quarrel?

LORD GREY. Ask of yonder man.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Man! Why not gentle, cousin? Never ran
Mean blood in one like him, who there, at ease,
In courteous silence stands. Now, an you please,
What more, my lord?

LORD GREY. I found the man you see
A-picking roses 'neath your balcony.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Why, this should hang him on the nearest tree!
And my blunt cousin picked, for company,
A quarrel. That is easier than a rose.
He found a thorn, as rather plainly shows
That crimsoned sleeve.

LORD GREY. Now look you, Cousin Bess,
Your jest is but ill-timed. Let me confess
I made this quarrel when, my heart aflame,
You left me stinging with your words. The blame
Is yours, fair cousin. Shafts in anger sent
May find mad errands ere their force be spent.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Now, by our Lady!

LORD GREY. Nay, but hear me still;
And let your servants know at least your will
That yonder venturer go on his way,
And no such words escape as haply may
Breed risks for me.

ELIZABETH VERNON. I shall consider first
When I have questioned him, nor shall the worst
Be worse, my lord, than what has chanced. You claim
Such license here as men may justly blame.
Best choose a fitter place, a feebler prey,
To hawk at with your anger.

At this Lord Grey, turning to one side, mutters to himself as he glances down the hall at Philip:

"He shall pay
His debt and yours, my lady. Those who court
Tongue-tilts with wounded creatures, find the sport
A doubtful venture. 'By the Cid,' he swore;
Mocked me with Spanish sword-play. Ah! my score
Is easily settled."

ELIZABETH VERNON. You are silent, sir?

LORD GREY.
I school my hurt heart to soft words, for her
Whose lightest word my very blood can stir;
And if in aught I have exceeded, rest
Assured I meant it not. Were it not best
I set this errant knight without your gate?

ELIZABETH VERNON.

No. I would speak with him. Pray do not wait:
My temper 's of the shortest. On your way
Send me the gentleman; and, cousin, stay! —
I 'll have no gossip.

Lord Grey, sullenly walking down the hall, pauses beside Philip Vernon:

"We shall meet again!
My lady waits. And for those tricks of Spain
I shall be readier. Good-day."

PHILIP VERNON. T' is plain
I was imprudent.

As he moves up the hall toward Elizabeth Vernon, she watches him, speaking to herself the while:

"Where saw I those eyes,
Large, gray, and watchful? Some elate surprise
Is in their gaze.

I pray you pardon us
This most uncourteous hour. It is not thus
We welcome unknown comers. I have heard
You would be nameless: so is every bird
That wings my garden. And 't is said you stole
A rose or two. If that be all — the whole
Of this last hour's sin — I hold you shriven;
Ay, and that lesson to a fool forgiven."

PHILIP VERNON. I thank you, madam.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Am I, sir, a book,
That you would read me with that eager look?

PHILIP VERNON.
Oft have I read you. I am wont to share
My idle hours with you.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Indeed, sir?

PHILIP VERNON. Where
The chase o'erhangs your garden, oft I sit
And read you page by page, nor want I wit
To comment on your sweetness.

ELIZABETH VERNON. You are bold
Past nurtured manners.

PHILIP VERNON. Pardon me, I told
But half my heart says.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Sir, an hour ago
We were but strangers.

PHILIP VERNON. Ere the sand shall flow
Another hour, we shall be strange once more,
And ever strange.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Is this some Quixote, mad,
That loved and lost, and cannot live it o'er?
— By all the saints, I think it very sad
To see good wits astray.

PHILIP VERNON. Are mine astray?
It seems they wandered wisely. Let them say
What saner wits would shun. The shyest maid
That ever loved, and, loving, grew afraid,
Would braver be to set her love in words.
Mine hath uncertain wings, like new-born birds,
And may not think on heaven. Forgive, forget!

Think me a lover wild of brain, once met
In some freaked tale of eld — a prince of fay
That came, and loved, and lost, and rode away.

ELIZABETH VERNON. That 's a wild riddle.

PHILIP VERNON. Time owns not the hour
Shall give some buds the answer of a flower.
You have been very gentle with a man
Who dare not name himself, who never can
Do more than thank your kindness. I am one
Accursed and nameless till my days be done.
How you have helped me you may never know,
Nor what you saved us both. I came your foe;
More than your friend I leave. Just Heaven knows
How sad my life has been. Let this one rose
I took for — well, no matter — let me guard
This rose for memory. It will make less hard
The strife of days to come.

ELIZABETH VERNON. You speak like one
By some strange cruelty of fate undone.
Be plain.

PHILIP VERNON. I may not further.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Then take hence
A woman's prayer for peace. There 's no offence.
In honest words, and none did ever speak
Words that more sadly touched me. I am weak
Where women should be. There 's no need to say
'T is but mere weakness. Must you, then, away?

PHILIP VERNON.

I dare not — must not — linger. Here to stay
Were to tempt folly. Ah, you may divine
All that my honor bids my heart resign.
So fades another dream. Alack! alack!
Dreams are but dreams — we may not dream them back.
Take you an exile's thanks. This gracious hour
Shall live remembered.

As he walks away, Elizabeth Vernon whispers to herself:

"Still those eyes have power
To tease dull memory with some strange surmise.
And trouble expectation."

Philip, walking down the gallery and seeing the portraits on the walls, stops abruptly; whereupon Elizabeth Vernon adds:

"What surprise
So moves this stranger?"

PHILIP VERNON. There 's the Lady Blanche,
That held the castle; there the baron stanch,
Who rode to battle laughing. Am I heir,
Through him, of that mad merriment I share
When swords are out and death is in the air?
My father's face! So gracious too! — by Heaven!
Now I can say, "Be all thy sin forgiven!"
And thank the gentle hand that swept away
The desperate counsels of a darker day.

For a moment he stands before the portrait, and then goes slowly down the gallery, and leaves the castle.

THE CHASE

Two days later, in the afternoon of the summer day, Philip Vernon walks here and there in the great forest, and at last, leaning against a tree, speaks thus to himself:

> "How wearily the hours go by! This chase
> I haunt, as haunts a bird the lonely place
> That holds her pillaged nest."

Seeing him of a sudden, Elizabeth Vernon comes timidly through the thickets.

ELIZABETH VERNON. I thought, Sir Knight,
You had been far from this. I would quick flight
Had set you miles away. I more than fear
My cousin's treachery. What keeps you here
Is much in question, and in days of war
The questioned man is lost. You should be far
From this to-morrow.

PHILIP VERNON. Not while dangers grow
So thick about one frail old man.

ELIZABETH VERNON. I know
Of you, of him, no more than what I hear
From one who hates you, yet enough to fear
For you such peril as may cost too dear
Some woman-heart at home.

PHILIP VERNON. Ah, there are none
Will weep for me. Of all that live not one.
As alien ships that only meet to part,

Thy life and mine have crossed on stormy seas.
Learn to forget. 'T is a most wholesome art.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
An art that women practise with less ease
Than men.

PHILIP VERNON.
There 's time to learn it, for no more
Shall we two meet.

ELIZABETH VERNON. No more!

PHILIP VERNON. Dear heart, no more.
I said forget. How could I say forget?
No, rather let some shadow of regret
Still haunt thy better fortunes in glad hours
When Spring is come again, and with her flowers
Arise frail memories and thoughts long dumb,
That are the wildings of the mind, and come
With Nature's yearning season.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Hush! I heard
Steps in the wood.

PHILIP VERNON. No, not a leaf has stirred.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
I am grown fearful. If you would but go
While the near hour is gracious —

PHILIP VERNON. No; ah, no!
Not for the bribe of love.

ELIZABETH VERNON. If, sir, you loved,
My prayer were quickly answered. You 'd be moved,
And fly.

PHILIP VERNON. You will not ask it. Those proud eyes
Would turn with scorn from him whose honor dies.
Men call me traitor: but, my lady fair,
That died in me when all of my despair
I cast before your feet. What mercy lies
In the sweet equity of honest eyes
I gladly trust.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Thank Heaven, I know not, sir,
What sad temptation may have bid you err.
I would not — will not — know. Do you forget
I suffer while you linger here?

PHILIP VERNON. And yet
I cannot go. I would we had not met,
Or God had given to me a kinder fate,
A less uncertain birth, a nobler state.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Uncertain, said you?

PHILIP VERNON. Yes, I said it — yes.
For that time has no comfort, no redress,
And you are worlds away. But here, alone,
Once let me speak. The falcon love has flown
Where the proud instinct of his haughty wings
Takes love that soars. Beneath it earth's mean things
Grow half unreal, and the morning rings
With new-born light his world of wish and will.
I love you — love you. Be it well or ill,

Still shall I love you. None may ever doubt
Hope's dying words. Alas! my treason's out.
Oh, traitor heart!

Elizabeth Vernon looks at Philip, and of a sudden seating herself upon a fallen tree, covers her face with her hands, and is silent for a moment.

PHILIP VERNON. You will not speak?

ELIZABETH VERNON. Wait, wait!
— My God, I love him!— Sir, as sad a fate
As yours will make my life and land the prize
Of some debt-burdened noble.— It were wise
We part at once.

PHILIP VERNON. At once!

ELIZABETH VERNON. Be merciful!
Go while my blinded sight with tears is dull.
You have been cruel. Ah, I cannot see
For tears of pity both for you and me.

PHILIP VERNON.
And have I wounded you, my gentle dove?
That were most sad of all, to hurt with love.
I have done wrong —

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Yes — no! Would you were spared
This most unhappy fortune!

As she ceases, Lord Grey comes abruptly into the open space, and cries out:

"Neatly snared!
'T is well I chanced to come. And have you dared,
A maid, a Vernon, thus to blot our fame,
My mother's lineage? Go! Go, take your shame
Where shame is common. Off with you! Fie! fie!
Have you no blushes? For this masking spy,
Who lured you hither —"

PHILIP VERNON. By my soul, you die!

They draw their swords as Hugh Langmayde, in haste coming through the wood, steps between them.

PHILIP VERNON. Out of my path!

HUGH LANGMAYDE.
No! no! In God's name, peace!
The Church forbids you.

Lord Grey falls back, sheathes his sword, and says:

"Easy 't is to cease
When finer nets are spread. A priest, indeed!
And thus disguised. In truth, it seems decreed
My double debt shall wait.— You, madam, need
No further words from me. Begone with speed!"

ELIZABETH VERNON. Oh, for one hour to be a man!

LORD GREY. True, true!
That had been better. There were less to rue.

PHILIP VERNON.

I shall be surely man enough for two;
And you, whose tongue is quicker than your blade,
Shall lack no lesson.

Lord Grey stands smiling, while Hugh Langmayde seizes Philip by the arm, and, drawing him away, says to him:

"Why have you delayed?
I waited long. 'T is like we are betrayed.
Lose not a minute; and if fall of night
Find me not with you at the ford, take flight:
I shall be dead. Now God protect the right!"

Philip cries to Elizabeth Vernon as he follows the priest:

"I may not wait. Heaven keep you!"

Then, turning to Lord Grey, says haughtily, and with a bow:

"We shall meet."

LORD GREY.

Yes, where the gallows makes revenge complete.

With these words he walks swiftly away, while the priest and Philip hurry through the wood in the opposite direction, leaving Elizabeth Vernon, who for a time stands still in the deepening shadows, and looks along the path where her lover has gone.

THE FORD

After dusk Philip Vernon, having waited long at the appointed ford, begins to walk to and fro uneasily, and says:

> "How long he tarries! I have that to say
> Will sorely hurt him; and yet, chance what may,
> This treason ends. Who's there?"

HUGH LANGMAYDE. Come! We are gone!
> Lost men, I fear. The wood, the wood! Ere dawn
> We must be far from this. One feeble fool
> Upon the rack betrayed us. Oh, that school
> Makes ready scholars! Death is close at hand.

As they leave the shore, the sound of men-at-arms comes from above and below, and always nearing them.

> "All ways are closed. O sad, unhappy land,
> That was so near deliverance! Here, my son,
> Take this, and go."

The priest, fainting and in haste, gives to Philip a packet.
"My earthly course is run."

PHILIP VERNON.
> I will not leave you. Quick! The garden gate
> I saw wide open. Come!

The old man, helped, hurries through the chase. As they cross an open space near the garden, the moon comes out, and from a thicket the flash of steel is seen, and the red blaze of half a dozen musquetoons. The

priest stumbles, and groans; men run forth, and, falling on Philip and his companion, stab the priest, who falls within the arched and open gateway of the garden of the castle, crying:

"Too late, too late!
Curse on the heretic! Fly, Philip!"

PHILIP VERNON. No!
Not I, by Heaven!

And, standing within the gateway, he cries fiercely as he fights:

"This for your coward blow,
You this for vengeance, and you this, and go
To hell that spawned you!"

As with cries and shouts the men fall back, there is a brief pause, while Lord Grey comes forward, sword in hand.

PHILIP VERNON. Have a care, my lord!
The place is somewhat narrow, and the sward
Gives but ill footing. Neither can I spare
To teach you tricks of fence to-day. Beware!
Habet! You have it. Yes, this under-thrust
Is deadly dangerous. Never put your trust
In that weak parry — traitor! coward! take
This for my love! this for that old man's sake!

As Lord Grey staggers and falls, he cries to those about him:

"In on him! seize him! Quick, the gate, the wall!"

Philip again attacks the men who are nearest, and as they give way, retreating, he shuts the gate. Then, kneeling, he lifts the priest's head, and exclaims:

"Ye saints, he's dead! Now let what may befall;
No worse can come to me."

As Philip bends over the priest, he hears him groan and mutter:

"Strike sure! You swore —
Kill, kill the heretic!"

PHILIP VERNON. Alas!

HUGH LANGMAYDE. There's more,—

Christ, for a minute's life to speak! I said
Of her — your mother — something —

But even as the words are on his lips the priest's head drops, and he dies.

PHILIP VERNON. He is dead!
God pity me, I loved him. Wrong or right,
I loved him well. Christ rest his soul to-night.

As he rises he hears voices and shots, and, instantly turning, flies through the shrubbery until, bewildered, he comes upon a doorway in the side wall of the castle, and, in the darkness stumbling in haste upon a narrow stairway, opens a door cautiously, and enters the chapel of the castle.

"Ye saints be praised! for I am well-nigh spent,
And here's a little respite, heaven-sent."

Breathing fast and hard, he sinks exhausted on the chancel step.

"The only friend I had this evening died;
I would to God that I were by his side!
But the mere brute in us will show his teeth:
I fought as if all life were glad.— Beneath
This cross a child I knelt."

Of a sudden he leaps up at sight of one coming through the darkness.

"Speak, or you die!"

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Mother of mercy! It is I! 't is I!
I thought you slain.

PHILIP VERNON. I have one friend the less.
They 've killed my only father; none may guess
My utter loneliness.

ELIZABETH VERNON. I hear men's feet.
Get you behind the altar.

PHILIP VERNON. Kiss me, sweet;
That will make death seem easy.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Go, make haste!

He obeys, and Elizabeth Vernon falls on her knees before the crucifix.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Oh, Mary Mother, pitiful and chaste!
Save! save him!

Here comes in hot haste the steward, with men-at-arms and the Queen's officers.

STEWARD. Peace! She prays!

The Lady Elizabeth rising, he says, as he comes forward:

"We seek in vain
The dead man's traitor comrade."

ELIZABETH VERNON. Well, 't is plain
He hides not here. Search you the river-banks;
The hills beyond the chase. He shall have thanks
Who finds this Spanish ruffler. Go! make haste!
These ducats for his capture. See you waste
No time about the castle. Shall it hap
This Spanish fox would seek so plain a trap?

Upon this the steward and men leave the chapel, and as the noise fades away Philip Vernon comes forward.

PHILIP VERNON. Right bravely done!

ELIZABETH VERNON. God guard you!

At this Philip Vernon gives her that packet the priest had given him, and, much troubled, says:

"Here is this
Sits heavy on my conscience. Ere I miss
Thy dear face, take it; for I have no mind
To carry treason. Should you chance to find
Aught that may ruin men, I pray of you
Destroy it; burn it."

ELIZABETH VERNON. Why not wait to view
What costs a minute? You have that to spare.
This altar-lamp suffices. Rest you there.
Some one might enter on us unaware.

As she opens the packet and reads therein a great surprise possesses her.

"This holds no treason; none! Where got you these?
The Vernon arms? — a locket? — mysteries
That much concern me."

PHILIP VERNON. Answer I have none.
The good priest gave me these ere life was done.
I thought them dangerous.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Letters out of Spain!
The King's grave attestation. Still in vain
I tax my cunning. Who are you that brought
This tale of wonder?

PHILIP VERNON. Madam, I was taught
To call myself plain Philip Vernon. I
Was that in Spain.

ELIZABETH VERNON. You Philip Vernon! Try
To tell me more. Is it indeed of you
What I find written here? Is — is it true?

PHILIP VERNON.
How can I know? The Jesuit, flying, found
A tired boy-swimmer floating as if drowned,
And kept him all these years in Spain.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Think. Strive
Some memory of childhood to revive.

PHILIP VERNON.
Ah, but what matters it to me? They bring
No happy fortune. What am I? A thing
The sea refused to bury, which that priest
Caught for mere pity ere it died — the least,
Ay, least of men am I. A waif forlorn.
Only in name a Vernon. I have borne
That old man's silence long, till he of late
Cursed me with knowledge of my bastard fate,
To use my anguish in a desperate game —
For what cared I, the unreckoned child of shame?

ELIZABETH VERNON.
A bastard! bastard! No, my lord; the pride
Of twenty earls is in your veins. He lied
Who told you that. Look! look! these papers! See!
I am the heir no longer; you are he.

Philip staggers back against a marble effigy of a boy on a tomb just behind him, and cries out:

"Christ help me! How I loved him! Yet he swore —
Swore by the rood! A priest! The rood! No more!
It cannot be."

ELIZABETH VERNON. It is. If less the gloom,
You might have seen, my lord, your very tomb
Behind you there. And fully on the scroll
How, Philip Vernon drowned, "his precious soul
Is with the saints." Oh, I could laugh, were death
Less neighbored to my mirth. Also it saith,

"A youth of parts; well loved," that's very truth;
"Witty and virtuous, also learned"— forsooth,
I think I must have loved you in your youth,
And ever since, my Philip.—— What to do
I know not. Yes! let your sword counsel you.
Seek my Lord Howard, the High Admiral;
Tell him this story boldly. Ay, tell all —
All this strange story. Let what may befall,
You cannot lose my love. Go, go, my lord;
Only to England could my soul afford
This new-born hope. Go now; the Spanish fleet
Is on the seas. Go, Philip. When you meet
Your boyhood's jailers, strike for brave Queen Bess,
And for this Bess, that is thy queen no less.
Go! I shall love you as no mortal man
Was ever loved of maid since love began.

PHILIP VERNON.
My God, I thank thee for this hour of grace.

As he speaks he kneels, and sets her hand to his lips, and then looking up, says:

"Hope, honor, home, a land to serve, a face
Dear as the summer sun to prisoned men,
Life, trust, and love, I have them all again.
Love! By my soul, I would I knew a word
Unsoiled by this world's commerce — never heard,
Save by some ardent angel, that should say
My more than earthly love."

ELIZABETH VERNON. Oh, haste away!
Let love teach haste. This for the stirrup-cup!
And now, God speed you! All the country's up;

The highway 's watched; I think none guard the shore:
That way is safest. Here, this farther door
Leads to the strand. Go, set those wits to see
What rose of honor you can pluck for me.

They go out of the chapel, and descend to the bank of the river.

PHILIP VERNON.
Good-night! Sweet night, that marries hope to love.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Good-night. God keep you, and all saints above!

She stands and watches him as his boat goes down the river.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Oh, I could cry, could laugh; and if I knew
A saint of laughter, I would pray that you
Do keep me merry for good cause. Alack,
Being but a maid, I would I had you back.

THE GARDEN

VERNON CASTLE OF A MORNING IN AUGUST 1588

ELIZABETH VERNON walks amidst the flowers, an open letter in her hand.

"Oh, the sweet morning and the sweeter news
That make me doubly glad! Ah, who would lose
The hours of grief that won this leave to smile

Through one long careless day of joy, the while
I wait a larger joy! Our smiles and tears
Have many meanings. I could weep to-day
For very joy; and yesterday my fears
Fetched me strange laughter, though my life seemed gray
With age of longing. Oh, be glad with me,
Ye English roses! See, the morning sun
Asks for the lifted face of prayer. The sea,
God's sea, laughs with us; we have won — have won!"

Thus speaking, Elizabeth Vernon walks to and fro among the flowers, and sometimes pauses to shadow her eyes with her hand, that she may look across the river all a-glitter with the sun. But at last she kneels on the sod, and, laughing, cries:

"I must kiss someone, something. You, red rose,
Will never whisper it if I suppose
You are my Philip. Kiss me, kiss me quick!
These be the lips I love. I 'll shut my eyes —
So not to know it is not he. I 'm sick
For kisses. Ah, but when he comes, and tries
To kiss me, I 'll be maidenly and wise,
And say, Fie on you, sir!"

Philip Vernon, coming of a sudden through the hedge:

"Sweetheart, take this!
I 'll play rose-lover with you, till I kiss
You one red rose with blushes. He who brings
A galleon-freight of kisses, each with wings
Of gathered honor, cannot beggared be."

ELIZABETH VERNON. My love! my lord!

PHILIP VERNON. One kiss from thee outweighs
A hundred given. Not all love's usury,
Not all the interest of unnumbered days,
Can keep us even.

ELIZABETH VERNON. There 's for ransom, see!
Oh, I 'll be honest. Tell me of the fight.
Indeed, I prayed for you both morn and night.
Now, tell me of it. Did we hear aright?
Hast seen the Queen?

PHILIP VERNON. Aye, and she mocked me, too,
Because these lands are cumbered, love, with you.
I had her pardon also. My Lord Grey
Takes more to kill him than most traitors may.

ELIZABETH VERNON. The packet reached the chancellor?

PHILIP VERNON. You did well
To send it. I have no long tale to tell.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Sit near me, Philip. Now, the battle, pray!

PHILIP VERNON.
Oh, I 'll be brief; I 've other things to say.
We caught them in the Channel. Day by day
We hung about them, like bold dogs that tease
Great lumbering bullocks; left them at our ease,
Then bit again, until each bloody deck,
Mast, sail, and timber, shorn to shattered wreck,

Their cannon silent, helpless, overpowered,
Northward they drifted, and a storm that lowered
Broke on their ruin, pitiless and swift.
The gray fog closed about them like a pall;
The great seas, leaping, smote them, and the lift
Grew dark above them. One bleak funeral,
They passed from sight of man. For us, we fled
To 'scape the storm's worst peril.
All is said
That may not till the morrow be delayed.

ELIZABETH VERNON.
Ah, never day like this has England seen!
Come, drink a cup to England and the Queen:
I 'll cast my love within the bowl.

PHILIP VERNON. That pearl
Shall jewel every cup of life.

ELIZABETH VERNON. Sweet Earl,
Thy people grow impatient. Hark! the chimes
Ring in their new lord, and these gladder times.

RESPONSIBILITY

Thus, lying among roses in the garden of the Great Inn after certain cups of wine, I, Attar El Din, sang of things to come, when, I being dead a day, the Angels of Affirmation and Denial should struggle for my soul.

"I, Moonkir, the angel, am come
To count of his good deeds the sum,
For this mortal death-stricken and dumb."

"I, Nekkir, the clerk of ill-thought,
Am here to dispute what hath wrought
This breeder of song, come to naught.

"Let us call from the valleys of gloom,
From the day's death of sleep and the tomb,
The wretched he lured to their doom."

Then, such as my song had made weep
Came parting the tent-folds of sleep,
Or rose from their earth-couches deep.

Spake a Voice:

"I sat beside the cistern on the sand,
When this man's song did take me in its hand,
And hurled me, helpless, as a sling the stone
That knows not will nor pity of its own.

Within my heart was seed of murder sown,
So once I struck — yea, twice, when he did groan."

Spake a Voice:

"Ay, that was the song
Which I heard as I lay
'Gainst my camel's broad flanks,
Thinking how to repay
The death-debt so bitter with wrong.
I rose, as he sang, to rejoice
With a blessing of thanks;
For the song ruled my slack will and me,
Like one who doth lustily throw
The power of hand and of knee
To string up to purpose a bow.
Quick I stole through the dark, but delayed
To hear how, with every-day phrase,
Such as useth a child or a maid,
From praise of decision to praise
Of the quiet of evening he fell.
Thus a torrent grows still on the plain
To mirror how come through the grain
The women with jars to the well.
Swift I drew o'er the sands cool and gray,
With my knife in my teeth held to slay.
Hot and wet felt my hand as it crept —
Lo! dead 'neath my hand the man lay;
This other had struck where he slept."

Then Moonkir, who treasures good deeds,
To mark how the total exceeds,
Said, "He soweth or millet or weeds

Who casts forth a song in the night,
As a pigeon is flung for its flight;
He knoweth not where 't will alight.
Lo, Allah a wind doth command,
And the caravan dies in the sand,
And the good ship is sped to the land."

Spake a Voice:

"I lay among the idle on the grass,
And saw before me come and go, alas!
This evil rhymer. And he sang how God
Is but the cruel user of the rod,
And how the wine-cup better is than prayer:
Whereon I cursed, and counselled with despair,
And drank with him, and left my field untilled,
Whilst all my house with woe and want was filled."

Spake a Voice:

"And I that took no heed of things divine,
But ever loved to loiter with the wine,
Was straightway sobered. From the inn I went,
And in the folded stillness of my tent
Wrestled with Allah, till the morning fair
Beheld this scorner like the rest at prayer."

Quoth I, this same Attar El Din,
Whose doubtful proportion of sin
These angels considered within:

"Ye weighers of darkness and light,
Ere cometh the day and the night,
Mark how, from the minaret's height,

The prayer-seed of Allah is strown:
In the heart of the man it is sown.
He tilleth, or letteth alone.

" Behold at even-time within my tent
I wailed in song because a death-shaft, sent
From Azrael's fateful bow, had laid in dust
My eldest-born; I sang because I must.
For hate, love, joy, or grief, like Allah's birds,
I have but song, and man's dull use of words
Fills not the thirsty cup of my desire
To hurt my brothers with the scorch of fire
That burns within. Yea, they must share my fate,
Love with me, hate, with me be desolate.
And so I drew my bowstring to the eye,
And shot my shafts, I cared not where or why,
If but the men indifferent, who lay
Beneath the palm-trees at the fall of day,
I could make see with me the dead boy's look
That swayed me as the bent reeds of the brook
Sway when the sudden torrent of the hills
From bank to bank the crumbling channel fills.

"Then one who heard me, and through stress of grief
Struggled with agony of loss in vain,
Into the desert fled, and made full brief
A clearance with the creditor called Pain,
And by a sword-thrust gave his heart relief.

" But one whose eyes were dry as summer sand
Wept as I sang, and said, ' I understand.'

" And one, who loved, did rightly comprehend,
Because I sang how, ever to life's end,

The death-fear sweetens love: and went his way
With deepened love to where the dark-eyed lay."

Spake a Voice:

"My father's foe, a dying man,
Thirst-stricken near the brookside lay;
Its prattle mocked him as it ran,
So near and yet so far away.
While the quick waters cooled my feet,
Hot from the long day's desert heat,
I drank deep draughts, and deep delight
Of vengeance sated and complete,
Because the great breast heaved and groaned,
The red eyes yearned, the black lips moaned,
Because my foe should die ere night.
Then, as a rich man scatters alms,
This careless singer 'neath the palms,
With lapse, and laughter, and pauses long,
Merrily scattered the gold of song,
A babble of simple childish chants:
How they dig little wells with the small brown hand;
How they watch the caravan march of the ants,
And build tall mosques with the shifting sand,
And are mighty sheiks of a corner of land.

"Ah! the rush and the joy of the singing
Swept peace o'er my hate, and was sweet
As the freshness the waters were bringing
Was cool to my desert-baked feet.

"Thereon I raised mine enemy, and gave
The cold clear water of the wave;

And when he blessed me I did give again,
And had strange fear my bounty were but vain;
When, as I bent, he smote me through the breast.—
And that is all! Great Allah knows the rest."

Said Nekkir, the clerk of man's wrong,
"Great Solomon's self might be long
In judging this mad son of song."

Then I, who am Attar El Din,
Cried, "Surely no two shall agree!
Thou mighty collector of sin,
Be advised: come with me to the Inn;
There are friends who shall witness for me—
Big-bellied, respectable, stanch,
One arm set a-crook on the haunch;
They will pour the red wine of advice,
And behold! ye shall know in a trice
How hopeless for wisdom to weigh
The song-words a poet may say."

Cried Moonkir, the clerk of good thought,
"Ah, where shall decision be sought?
Let us quit this crazed maker of song,
A confuser of right and of wrong."

"But first," laughed I, Attar El Din,
"I am dry: leave my soul at the Inn."

NEWPORT, 1891.

WIND AND SEA

Scene I

A June Afternoon.—Meadows.—A Farm, with distant Woods; New Jersey Coast; Cape May.

An idle group within the willow's shade
We lay and chatted, holding lazy tilts,
And many a lance of mocking laughter broke,
Or calmly settled creeds and governments
High on the pleasant uplands of content,
Till soon the westering sun peeped underneath
The fringes of our green tent-skirts, and fell,
Where on the paling-fence the milk-cans gleamed,
Red in the level gold, whilst suddenly,
Swift from the sea, the gay salt breezes came,
And, dipping like the swallows here and there,
With quick cool kisses touched the startled grain,
And fled ashamed, to seek new loves afar,
Where in the dark damp marsh the lilies float,
And lustrous-leaved the white magnolia lifts
Its silvery censers, and the frogs, like friars,
Intone their even-song along the marge.

Hester (*rising*).
How sweet the air! Wilt hear the song you made
Of this same gentle north wind's winter pranks?

The lusty north wind all night long
His carols sang above my head,
And shook the roof, and roused the fire,
And with the cold, red morning fled.

Yet ere he left, upon my panes
He drew, with bold and easy hand,
The pine and fir, and icy bergs,
And frost ferns of his northern land;

And southward, like the Northmen old
Whose ships he drove across the seas,
Has gone to fade where roses grow,
And die among the orange-trees.

ALFRED.

That 's music for a poet's soul, his words
Soft slipping from a woman's lips, the while
Caressed by lingering sunshine wrapt she stands,
A shining aureole round her fallen hair.

HENRY.

A bid for equal flattery. Let us go
Across the sand dunes o'er the mazy creeks.
Hear how old ocean calls us. Come away.

FRANK.

Dost thou remember that October day
We three together stood and saw at eve
The wanton wind yon sleeping waves arouse,
Till at the touch of that coy courtesan
Strange yearning seized them, and with shout and cry
They followed fleetly, while she, laughing, fled
Across the golden-rods above the beach?

HENRY.

Ay, then it was you, perched beneath an oak,
To us, the long expectant heirs, set forth
King Autumn's testament and royal will.

HESTER.

I pray you tell again his dying thoughts,
And we shall lie upon the meadow grass
And be as heirs should be, stern visaged, grave,
Whilst you within yon bower of wild grapes stand:
So shall your words steal o'er the listening ear,
Breeze-broken, while the melancholy sea
Moans his sad chorus on the distant shore.

FRANK.

Brown-visaged Autumn sat within the wood,
And counted miserly his ripened wealth:
I, Autumn, heritor of Summer's wealth,—
I, Autumn, who am old and near to death,—
Do thus make clear my will; I dowered earth
With fruit and flowers. I fed her hungry tribes,
The bee, the bird, the worm, the lazy flocks,
And like a king who unto certain death
Goes proudly clad, in royal state I go,
Through the long sunset of October woods,
Where like a trembling maid the smooth-limbed beech
Lets fall her ruddy robes, or where afield
Red vine leaves fleck the cedar's sombre cone,
Or where the maple and the hickory tall
Shed the long summer's store of garnered gold.
Mine, too, the orchard's raining fruit, and mine
Round-shouldered melons fattening in the sun;

Mine the brown pennons of the rustling maize,
The squirrel's nutty wealth, the wrinkled gourd.
For I am Autumn, lord of fruits and flowers,—
God's almoner to all the tribes of man.
Here, then, to earth and all her habitants,
I, dying, leave what Summer's bounty gave:
Great store of grain, ripe fruit, and tasselled corn;
Yea, last of all, and best, I here bequeath,
With loving thought, a special legacy
To all good fellows everywhere on earth:
To them I give the sun-kissed grapes of Spain,
The Rhine's autumnal treasure, and the fruit
Of knightly Burgundy and winding Rhone;
Nor less the grape of Capri's lifted cliff,
The purple globes that jewel Ischia's isle,
And that sad vintage weeping holy tears
On black Vesuvian slopes. To them I give
The soothing sweetness of the Cuban leaf
Wherewith to hold good counsel, when life palls,
Wherewith to charm away some weary hour.
And when from thoughtful lips the pale blue
wreaths
Curl upward, and, the wanderer's only hearth,
His pipe-bowl, glows with hospitable fires,
I charge them drink a single cup, and say:
He was a good old fellow — peace to him.
So died great Autumn, passing like a mist,
Where in the woodland verge the maples rain
Reluctant gold in hesitating fall.

ALFRED.

What ho! good minstrel. Let us seaward roam,
'T is but a half-hour's stroll past yonder hill.

FRANK.

I well recall the way. It lies within
A wood of stunted cedars and of firs,
Which heard in infancy the great sea moan,
And so took on the wilted forms of fright.

HESTER.

Well, too, I know it: when the tide is up
'T is barred and traversed by an hundred creeks,
So populous with lilies, you might dream
King Oberon's navy rode at anchor there.

FRANK.

Let us away to it. Our sculptor here
Knows not the sea as we do. He shall feast
His eager eyes on it, and own to us
That earth has glories other than the curves
Of lithe Apollo and the queen of love.

SCENE II

Seashore.—Sand Dunes dotted with distorted Trees.

HENRY.

Why never can the painter tell to us
This awful story of a lonely sea,
This terrible soliloquy of nature?
Why must he slip us in the bit of red,
The group of fishers or the tossing ship?
Who asks for life or human action here?

FRANK.

Nay, man is nature's complement. The sea,
The sky, the flowers suggest him. Best I love
The smiling landscape of a woman's face.

ALFRED.

But he who worships nature, ought to be
The ready lover of her thousand gods.

HESTER.

Lo! what a thought is yon triumphant sea,
A thought so perfect in its competence,
That I would leave it to its loneliness.

ALFRED.

Think what it was when unto God there came
This great sea-thought.

FRANK. Here, friend, your chisel fails.
'T is powerless here. Thank heaven, I at least
Can some way capture it with feeble brush.

ALFRED.

Alas, 't is no man's prize. It mocks us all.
Leave me but only man, and you may paint,
And you may chisel. I would sail alone
The great Atlantic of the human heart.

HENRY.

Do you remember how, last summer, here
We played with fancies, and in idle mood
Struck to and fro the shuttlecocks of thought?

FRANK.

Ah, well I do. 'T was such an hour as comes
Once in the life of joy. Just here we lay.
As oft before, you led the playful race.

HENRY.

Watch now the waves; each has its little life,
High-couraged triumph in yon crest of pride,
Some proud decision in its onward sweep,—
Destruction, failure,—'t is a history!

FRANK.

I like it best when of a winter day
The cold dry norther rolls athwart the beach
The gleaming foam-balls into serpents white,
And all the sand is starred with rainbow lights.

HESTER.

It knoweth all the secrets of my moods:
To-day is gay with me, to-morrow grave.

FRANK.

For me its voice is ever sorrowful
As some God's grief beyond all earthly speech.

HESTER.

How wave on wave turns lapsing on the beach,
Like the great leaves of some eternal book.

ALFRED.

Unread forever since creation's dawn.
I pray you notice how the seaside trees
Seem flying headlong, all their withering limbs
Stretched landward, craving refuge from the sea.

FRANK.

As they might be remorseful murderers,
That heard the hoarse deep, like an angry foe,
Storm up the sand slopes — nearer, nearer still,
Crying, Vengeance, vengeance! all the summer night.

1865.

THE SHRIVING OF GUINEVERE

Still she stood in the shunning crowd.
"Is there none," she said, aloud,
"None who knelt to me, great and proud,
Will say one word for me, sad and bowed?
Alas! it seems to me, if I
Were one of you, who, standing by,
Hear gathered in a woman's cry
The years of such an agony,
It seemeth me that I would take
Sweet pity's side for mine own sake,
And, knowing guilt alone should quake,
For chance of right one battle make."
But, no man heeding her, she stayed
Beneath the linden's trembling shade,
And peered, half hopeful, half afraid,
While passed in silence man and maid.
She, staring on the stone-dry street
Through the long summer-noonday heat,
And, stirring never from her seat,
Half saw men's shadows pass her feet.
"Ah me!" she murmured, "well I see
How bitter each day's life may be
To them who have not where to flee
And are as one with misery."
But, whether knight to tourney rode,

Or bridal garments past her flowed,
Or by some bier slow mourners trode,
No sign of life the woman showed.
When as the priestly evening threw
The blessed waters of the dew,
About her head her cloak she drew
And hid her face from every view;
Till, as the twilight grew to shade,
And passed no more or man or maid,
A sudden hand was on her laid.
"And who art thou?" she moaned, afraid.
Beside her one of visage sad,
Which yet to see made sorrow glad,
Stood, in a knight's white raiment clad,
But neither sword nor poniard had.
"One who has loved you well," he said.
"Living I loved you well, and dead
I love you still; when joys were spread
Like flowers, and greatness crowned your head,
None loved you more. Not Arthur gave —
He will not check me from his grave —
So pure a love; nor Launcelot brave
With deeper love had yearned to save."
"Then," said the woman, still at bay,
"Why do I tremble when you lay
A hand upon my shoulder? Stay,
What is your name, sir knight, I pray?
For wheresoever memory chase
I know not one such troubled face,
Nor one that hath such godly grace
Of solemn sweetness any place:
But, whatsoever man you be,
What is it you would have of me?"

Whereon, he, smiling cheerily,
Said: "I would have you follow me."

Not any answer did he wait.
But turned towards the city gate;
Not any word said she, but straight
Went after, bent and desolate;
And, as a dream might draw, he drew
Her feet to action, till she knew
That house and palace round her grew,
And some wild revel's reeling crew,
And dame and page and squire and knight,
And torches flashing on the sight,
And fiery jewels flaming bright,
And love and music and delight;
But slow across the spangled green
The stern knight went and went the queen,—
He solemn, silent, and serene,
She bending low with humble mien.
But where he turned the music died,
Love-parted lips no more replied,
And, shrinking back on either side,
Serf and lord stared, wonder-eyed,
Or marvelling shrunk swift away
Before that visage solemn, gray,
Till, where the leaping fountains sway,
Thick showed the knights in white array.
Where'er he passed, though stirred no breeze,
The leaves shook, trembling on the trees.
Where'er he looked, by slow degrees
Fell silence and some strange unease,
While whispers ran: "Who may it be?
What knight is this? And who is she?"

But only Gawain looked to see,
And, praying, fell upon his knee.
Then said a voice full solemnly:
"Of all the knights that look on me,
If only one of them there be
That never hath sinned wittingly,
Let him the woman first disown,
Let him be first to cast a stone
At her who, fallen from a throne,
Is sad and weary and alone.
Him, when the lists of God are set,
Him, when the knights of God are met,
If that he lacketh answer yet,
The soul of him shall answer get."

Then, as a lily bowed with rain
Leaps shedding it, she shed her pain,
And towering looked where men, like grain
Storm-humbled, bent upon the plain;
Whilst over her the cold night air
Throbbed with some awful pulse of prayer,
As, bending low with reverent care,
She kissed the good knight's raiment fair.
When as she trembling rose again,
And felt no more in heart and brain
The weary weight of sin and pain,
For him that healed she looked in vain;
And from the starry heavens immense
Unto her soul with penitence
Came, as if felt by some new sense,
The noise of wings departing thence.

1874.

THE SWAN-WOMAN

A LEGEND OF THE TYROL

I TOLD this story once to Kaiser Max.
If he believed it, that can no man say.
Within the Alte Kirche they have placed
His statue, kneeling, sword in hand, at prayer;
And though the cunning carver in his skill
Hath on that face a hundred battles set,
And dooms of men, and many a laden year
Of swift decisions, not those lips in life
Told more they would not than this face of bronze.

Hast been at Innspruck? When the evening glooms,
Go see him girt about with lord and dame,
Arthur of England, Alaric, and the Duke.

In those days every great man had his fool,
And some men were their own, which saved some fools
Their share of fools' pay, cuffs; but so it was.
And now it chanced our ancient fool was dead
And gone to heaven, to be an angel-fool.
Thus, fool-craft prospering, they came by scores
To that bleak castle in the Tyrol hills,

And, while my lady and the knight above
Looked from the balcony, made sport below,
And jeered the men-at-arms, or mocked the page.
But most had wits like bludgeons, till my lord,
A smileless man save when in shock of arms
He struck a blow that ever after quenched
The human laughter of some gentler soul,
Tired of their jesting, drove them roughly forth.
So, out they went, until, one summer eve,
Came gaily singing up the castle hill
A man — scarce more than man, with cap and bells,
Head up, chin out, just a fool's carriage all;
And strutted gravely round the court, and smiled,
And kissed white fingers to my lady's maid,
Whereon, at last, the burly cook cried out,
"A silent fool; God send us many such!"
But he, "Your Greasy Grace will pardon me, for I
Am but a lady's fool." Quoth Hans the Squire,
"Ho then, 't will suit my lord, a lady's fool!"
And so they giggling pushed him up the stairs,
And through the great hall where my lord at meat
Sat with my lady and a score of guests,
Pilgrim and merchant, and, above the salt,
A knight or two, and kinsfolk of my lord.
"What jest is this?"

"We 've found a lady's fool!
A silent fool, who can but grunt a joke
Like our old boar;" but as he spake I saw
My fool's right hand twitch at his belt to left,
As one through habit seeking for his sword
When stung by insult; flushing deep, he bowed,
Said, "By your leave, my lady," turned and fetched

Big Hans so rude a buffet on the ear,
The big squire tumbled half across the hall.
"Saint Margaret!" cried my lord, "the jest is good.
And this is what you call a lady's fool?
Canst gossip, mock, tell tales, sing songs at need?"
"Ay, noble sir, sing, jest, crack jokes or heads;
But that 's a serious business, and spoils fools,
The cracker and the cracked. Perchance my lord
Would try my folly for a month or two,
When, if it reach the level of my lord,
If I crack jokes as well as he cracks heads,
My lord shall set my wage."
"So be it, fool.
Give him the dead fool's tower; and look you, fool,
Leave to your betters the rough sport of blows,
Lest to your grief I take to fools' trade too."
Low bent the fool to hide his troubled face,
Then meekly said, "King Folly's fool were I
To doubt my lord's success." But while the Count,
Perplexed and grim, rose angrily, the dame,
Pleased with the tilting at her heavy lord,
Laughed a sweet girl-laugh outright, and for hint
Plucked at her dull lord's sleeve, while level-eyed
To meet whatever gaze might question his,
Our fool said carelessly, "I jest for dames.
A woman's fool am I, as who is not
Some woman's fool?"— then lightly, wrist on hip,
With something of too easy grace fell back
Smiling and gay. And so we got our fool.
But I, that had been bred to be a priest,
And shut in convent walls had learned perforce
To read men's eyes for comment on their lips,
Saw some quick change in this man's as he turned,

Some lifting of the lids. Orbs garnet-hued
In wide white margins set, and tender, too,
Methought a strange face for a fool, indeed.
Yet somehow from his coming all the house
Grew gay. And never gentler jester was.
For when he laughed 't was like a baby's laugh,
Less at than with you; but he won them all,
Cook, page, and men-at-arms; and surly Hans
He charmed by teaching him the buffet's trick
And bought him a new dagger, and had gold
For them that wanted; yet my lord he shunned,
Or, meeting, puzzled him with jest on jest,
Some savage truth in wordy masquerade.
But above all he was my lady's fool;
Sang for her,— ay, sang to her, I should say;
Told tales of Arthur in the chapel yon,—
Stories of ancient magic and quaint jests
Of masque and tourney and the Kaiser's court,
So that my lady, who was young and fair,
And yearning for some heart-hold upon life,
Like the loosed tendril of a wind-blown vine
That seeks and knows not why, smiled once again,
And blossomed like a bud surprised by June;
Then took to hawking, to my lord's delight,
With me, a page, for company, and the fool
To call the hawks, or tie their jesses on.
So, many a day I followed them, as home
They rode, he talking strange things of the stars,
Or calling bird and beast with cries they knew.
Cursed goblin-tricks, not priest-taught, be you sure;
Could read you, too, the thing that was to be
By peering at your palm, until my lord
Bade one day tell him what would come about

When he, the Count, should issue forth to take
His turn at beating back the island lords.
I judged the fool reluctant, but he took
That square brown hand on his, and lightly traced
With fingers lithe and white its mazy lines,
Then paused, grew pale, and said, "What God doth
hide
Leave thou to time's wise answer;" but the Count
Swore roundly that the fool was half a priest,
Yet started up in haste, and asked no more.

And so the fool, because men named him so,
Had leave to go and come; or at her feet
To lie, and wing with laughter some sweet words,
Or with fierce emphasis of ardent eyes
To look the thought he dared not put in speech.
So, love, now bold, now put to timid flight,
Grew none the less for seeming-shy retreats,
Like the slow, certain tides that are made up
Of myriad wave-deaths.

Yet she knew it not.
Then came the war. To north the Margrave rose;
To south the great sea-lords broke out anew.
So, late in May our broad, bull-headed lord
Put on his armor, growling, since each year
He could not have it like a crab's case grow,
But guessed some exercise in cracking skulls
Might slack his belt, if helped by scant camp-fare.
And scant it was, for some few marches thence
A robber horde fell on him from a wood,
Slew half his train, and plucked him from his horse,
And bore him with them as they fled away.
But Hans they loosed, sore hurt, and bade him take

His way across the hills, and tell the dame
What fate her lord should have if three days gone
No ransom bond came back to bring release.
But two days later fell the wounded squire,
Dust-grayed and bleeding, at the lady's feet,
And failing fast cried out, "My lord, my lord!
Ransom — thy lord — a castle in the hills —
Three days — and two are gone — the third he dies."
Then rose upon his elbow, said some words
None heard except the fool, and so fell back,
And ended honestly an honest life.
But as he spoke, in haste my lady turned,
Some masterful set purpose in her face;
Bade double guards, called in more men for aid,
The castle put in siege-shape, knowing not
What ill might follow next. Then stood in doubt,
Till on the fool's stirred face her large eyes fell.
"And this must end!" she cried. "Sir, follow me!"
And led him out upon the eastern tower,
Where many an eve they two had stayed to watch
Tofana's shadow cross Ampezza's vale.
Then of a sudden facing him, in wrath,
"Sir, was it knightly, this that you have done?
What crime or folly bade you refuge here?"
"Madam, a poor fool's fancy." "Nay, 't was you,
'T was you who in the jousts at Ims, last year,
O'erthrew my lord, and won the tourney's prize,
Then round the lists with lifted visor rode,
Cast in my lap the jewel as you passed,
And known to none, unquestioned, rode away.
Nay, sir, the truth, the truth." This once again
He set his face for company with a lie,

But looking, saw her red lips droop in scorn,
Nor dared to meet the judgment in her eyes,
So, backward fell a pace, and murmured low:
"I came because I loved you, and I stayed
For like good reason; yea, my life had been
This and no more if I could but have lived
Beside you, near you. For content were I
To leave my peers their strife for gold or land,
And in the quiet convent of my love
To let sweet hours grow to days as sweet,
And these to months of ever-ripening joy."
"Alas!" she moaned, "God help me in my need!"
Because the tender blazonry of joy
Lit face and neck with wandering isles of red.
"Ah, love!" he cried, seeing all her sweet dismay,
"The day is ours. Fly with me — love is ours."
But then some angel memory came at call.
"Not so," she said. "Pray sit you there awhile.
We both are young — too young to stain with sin
Of evil loves the weary years to come.
That bitter day the margrave stormed St. Jean,
There in the breach all that God gave to love,
Father and brothers, died. None left, not one.
And then a hell of rapine and of blood
Swept all the town; and I — well, this is all:
The man that is my husband now, he saved,
Alas! he saved me. Yet I love him not."
Then like to one who, stranded on strange shores,
Awaking sees a color in the sky,
And knows not yet if it be dawn or dusk,
Agaze, he saw the rose-light leave her face,
And, being noble, knew the nobler soul.
"I go," he said,—"the thing I did was ill."

But on his motley sleeve a hand she laid.
"Now that I know how, loving me, love guides
To honor, not to baseness, I dare ask
The man's clear counsel, for my soul is set
To quit me of the debt of given life;
Since then, perchance, I may myself forgive
For that I love him not, and shall not love;
And if I ask of thee, because I must,
To do the thing is hateful to thy soul,
It will be only then to bid thee go,
Because I may not love thee, and I shall."
Then he paused, pondering, urged here and there,
Like some strong swimmer whom the waves at will
Hurl landward and take back; till, in strange haste,
As one who fears delay, he spake quick words:
"Now if thy soul be certain of itself,
If thou canst say, Thus will I, death or life!
I hold a charm which, to strong purpose wed,
Shall free thy heart from bondage to this debt.
Once on a forest verge, I, but a lad,
Set free a Jew some robber lord left bound,
And for remembrance got this little ring:
A face in gold, you see, and o'er its eyes
Twin hands clasped tight. But if at midnight one
Shall turn it, and shall dare with purpose sure
To will that she shall be some living thing,
Or bird or other creature of the woods,
Three days the charm will hold, the fourth will break.
The winged wood-pigeon knows to find its mate,
And if thou wilt but give thine instinct wings
Thou too shalt find thy mate; but I, if I
Should crown my follies with a larger jest,
And set my master free, the deed were thine,

Because thine own heart is not more thine own
Than I who love thee." Then in dread he stood,
Fearing the devil in himself; but she,
"Not so! the debt is mine. If death befall,
Death is an honest debtor, and God pays,"
Seized quick the ring, and of a sudden fled,
While slow the fool went down the turret stair.
"Alas!" he said, "can heaven be bought with hell
As hell with heaven thereafter?" Then alone
Swift from the castle-gate he fled, and came
To where, long miles away, within the wood,
Three knights stood waiting, and a steed that neighed
To greet his master. But he would not arm,
And saying merely "Yea, a fool I am,"
Leapt on his horse, and swiftly through the wood
Rode, while they whispered, "Surely he is dazed."

At noon of night our gentle lady tied
A silken-threaded letter round her neck,
And on the turret stood and turned the ring,
And looked, and saw — for now the moon was full —
Strange sunsets glowing in the changeful gem,
And mists of color floating from its depths;
And crying, "Once he praised my swan-bowed neck!"
Put all her soul in one fierce wish, and felt
Such change as death may bring or life, and then
Half fear, half wonder, like a soul reborn,
Rose on white wings, that trembled as they rose,
And flared vast shadows o'er the old gray keep;
Till in the joyous freedom of her flight
Strong with delight of easy strength she soared,
And caught the warm gold of the unrisen sun
As souls unprisoned win new hopes and joys;

Saw with strange thrills the white wedge of her mates,
And falling gently through the morning light
Lit where the sedgy margins green and brown
Stirred, as with tawny webs they beat the wave.
Some bird-born pleasure luring, long she stayed
To bathe her bosom's silver in the lake,
Till all the summer day went by, and night
With sleep wave-rocked by cool wood-scented winds.
But when another morning brake, and glad
On eager wings she rose to greet the morn,
Too late she knew no tender instincts led.
Wing-weary, helpless, hopeless, sore beset,
Her gold eyes fell upon a train of knights,
And strong with joy that half was shame or fear,
Weak-winged she fluttered down, and saw below
The fool beside her lord, and knew, alas,
What gentle longings drew her to the earth.
There, sullen with the anger of the dull,
Her grim lord rode, or with wild oaths complained
Because with prison fare his arms were weak,
His eyes grown dim: then of a sudden spied
The wild white-winged thing over him, and snatched
A cross-bow from his saddle, set a bolt,
And loosed the string, and heard a human cry
So terrible that none who rode with him
Lived to forget it, or the thin red rain
That flecked the fool's white cloak, while slowly down
Light feathers flitted. Then the fool turned short,
Caught the knight's saddle-axe, and cried aloud,
"Hast thou, O beast set free, no kindly sense?"

And smote the great brute knight so fierce a blow
That man and steed rolled helpless; but the fool
Struck swiftly here and there, rode down a squire,
Cast wide his axe, and spurring wild his horse,
With eyes in air, grim-staring like a dog
His master calls, fled where the wounded swan
Fast faded in the yellow sunset's glow.
Homeward in wonderment the knight they bore,
Hurt, not to death, and ever as we went,
Cursing himself, and us, and most the fool,
And marvelling much why came not forth his dame.
None dared to tell him that three days had gone
Since any saw her face. So, all the house
Ran to and fro like to an ant-heap stirred,
While he, that loved her in his stolid way,
And blindly craved some sweetness never won,
Sought here and there in anger, like low souls
That turn to wrath all passions, and at last
Brake wildly out upon the turret-top,
'Midst man and squire and groom and wildered
maids;
For there they found the lady, cold and still,
The sweetest dead thing that a man could see,
And in her bosom white a cross-bow bolt.

1883.

A MEDAL

PANDOLPHUS MALATESTA, ISOTTA.

MALATESTA.

Why does it pleasure me, Isotta, why?
Canst guess,— I cannot,— wherefore such as I
Should crave to see myself in bronze or gold?
Matteo hath art's courage. He is bold!
God-made or devil-fashioned, out I go
For comment of the world, or friend or foe.
What saith this face, Isotta? — what to you,
As to a gazer chance hath brought to view?
You smile,— dost dare? The soul beyond your eyes
Will bid you risk all other things save lies.

ISOTTA.

A jewel set in brass,— yet why, God knows,
If God knows anything of such as those,
Like me, who fear you not as men know fear,
Being, see you, so little and so dear.
Then lying is the luxury of the great,
The marge of perils sweet. You dare me — wait;
Give me the wax. This side face doth relate
More truth than most, my lord, may care to state.
And yet, not all; nay, with strange cunning, hides

What little good or noble haply bides
For rare occasion. Oh! you bade me try
At truth as of men dead beyond reply.
Be sure, my lord, I could not lie to you.
Why did Delilah love her great brute Jew,
Hated and loved him? Riddle that, my lord.

MALATESTA.

Rare old Genosthos Platon, whom I stored
In yon stone tomb, might guess in vain for you
Betwixt his dreams of Plato, but for me,
Too brief is life to riddle love or hate.
The face, the face,— what secrets shall it prate
When I am dead, and babbling students claim
In feebler days to know who set his name,
Ensigns, and heraldry on yonder wall,
With yours, my dame? Dost fear to tell me all?

ISOTTA.

Narrow the forehead; bushy eyebrows set
O'er lizard lids, cross-burrowed; hair as jet;
The nose rapacious, falcon-curved, morose;
Cheeks wan, high-boned, o'er hollows; lips set close,
Like each to each, large, pouting, to men's eyes
Twin slaves of passion, apt for love or lies.
They who shall read in gentler days that face
Shall call you mad, and wonder at your race.

MALATESTA.

Dost think they tell my story? Lo, how sweet!
The swallows flashing down the sunlit street;
A thrush upon the window,— he at least
Must hold me guileless as yon pale boy-priest.
What more, fair mistress? How he seeks your eye!

ISOTTA.

'Neath this stern brow forgotten murders lie;
The red lip-lines confess lust, scorn, and hate;
Dark treacheries 'neath those sombre eye-caves wait.
Ah, where, my lord, the scholar's studious pain,
The zest for art, the Plato-puzzled brain,
The high ambition for diviner thought,
That joyed to see how well Alberti wrought?

MALATESTA.

The earthquake scars the mildly tended soil,
And leaves behind no trace of man's slow toil;
Lo, then, at last you find some alms of praise.
Who sees a man full-faced must meet his gaze;
This side face, mark you, lacks the quick eye's change.
Unwatched, men see it. Ever is it strange
To him who carries it. 'T is like, you say.

ISOTTA.

My good lord, so Matteo said to-day.

MALATESTA.

Now what a thing is custom! You can scan
This face and call me good. See how a man
May scourge through centuries with the whips of shame,
And curse you with the thing that wins him fame.

ISOTTA.

Minutes are courtiers. The inflexible years
To no man palter, know not loves nor fears.

MALATESTA.

Ah! none but you would dare in bitter speech

To front the Malatesta. Doth naught teach
Your careless tongue to fear loose talk of me?

ISOTTA.

Yet so the meanest churl shall prate of you,
When axe or spear sets free your soaring soul,
And its wild flight hath won an earthly goal.

MALATESTA.

Small care have I what man or gossip say,
When axe or spear-thrust come to close my day.
And yet, and yet, Isotta, when my face
Pales on some stricken field, and in my place
Another wooes you,—what wilt say, my maid?

ISOTTA.

Much as the rest. The dead are oft betrayed.

MALATESTA (*aside*).

Not by the dead. No other lips shall lay
Love's bribe upon your cheek.
(*Aloud*). Another day
Fades in the West, behind yon crumbling tower!
Give me my Plato. Pray, how stands the hour?

1883.

THE HUGUENOT

1686

Dry-lipped with terror, o'er the broken flints
Stumbling I ran, my baby tightly held,
And of a sudden, coming from the wood,
Saw the low moon blood-dash the distant waves,
Felt the wet grass-slope of the cliff, and heard
The hungry clamor of the hidden sea,
Nor dared to stir, but waited for the dawn,
And prayed and wondered why the beast alone
Some certain instinct guided in its flight;
When, God be praised! I saw my Louis stand
With slant hand o'er his brow, this wise, at gaze —
Just a mere outline, none but I had seen,
Set 'gainst the flitting white caps of the sea.
Then I said softly, "Louis," and he turned,
(I think that he would hear me were he dead).
But as he quickly drew across the cliff
I saw the sudden sadness of his face
Grow through the lessening night, and ere I moved
A strong arm caught me, while he cried in haste,
"Why didst thou add new sorrow to my flight?
Who hath betrayed it? Surely once again,
When these dark days are over, I had come
To fetch thee and my mother and the boy,

Where in free England we should find a home."
"Home! Home!" I gasped. "Home! Mother!"
for the words
Choked me as with a man's grip on the throat.
But he, hard breathing, held me fast and cried,
"Speak quickly,— death is near!" (but yet his
hand
Put back my hair and soothed me). So I gasped,
"As from our preaching in the wood we rode
With Jacques the forester, as is his way,
He fell to singing Clement Marot's psalm,
For them God calleth to the axe or rack.
I, liking not the omen, bade him cease;
Then saw a-sudden, far above the hill
A tongue of flame leap upward, heard a shot,
And then another, till at last our Jacques,
Bidding me wait, rode on. An hour ago,
While yet the night was dark,— he came again,
And thrust our little one within my arms,
And sharply speaking, bade me urge my horse,
And on the way told all."

"Told all,— told what?"

"The dear old house is burned, thy mother dead!"

"Dead, Marie?"

"Dead! one fierce pike-thrust, no more!
She did not suffer, Louis!"

"But the babe?"

"Jacques found him near the dial, in the maze."
"My God! there 's blood upon his little hands!"
"Ay! it is thought she had him in her arms,

(Thy mother's, Louis!) and it must have been
She crawled, blood-spent, to hide the little man,
And seeking somewhere help, fell down and died
Beside the fountain."

"Oh, be quick! what more?"
"This Jacques to me, as hitherward we spurred,
For, as we came, a noise behind us grew,
And, haply, I have only brought you death.
'T was but one man, we guessed; the rest, misled,
Rode toward St. Malo, and Jacques leaving me—"

"Hush! listen!"
"Nay, I see the boat, my lord!"

"Be silent, Marie; kneel, here by the rock.
Let come what may, no word." And so I knelt,
And trembling saw the fiery glow of morn
Shudder like some red judgment o'er the sea.
This while my dear lord bent and kissed the babe,
And then my cheek, my forehead, and my lips,
Unsheathed his sword, and gazing inland stood,
And slowly turned the ruffles from his wrist.
But then my heart beat fiercely in my breast,
For, on the sward between us and the verge,
Leapt of a sudden from the pines a man,
And paused a breath's time, for behind him dropped
An awful cliff wall to a stepless shore,
And steep the marge sloped to it, and before,
Close at his breast, he saw my Louis' blade,
Red like a viper's tongue, flash in the morn.
Then said my sweet lord, speaking tender low,
"Stir not, dear wife. It is the Duke, thank God!"
So, looking up I saw that traitor face,

With eyes of eager seeking, right and left,
Glance up the cliff, and then I heard a voice
Unlike my Louis', hollow, hoarse, and changed.
"Too late! They will not find thee. Quick, on guard!
The crows shall get thee graveyard room. On guard!"
Whereat the Duke turned short. No better blade:
Thrice have I seen him, in our happier days,
Disarm my Louis in the armory play.
Whence, for a moment, as the rapiers met,
Fear caught and held me, till I looked and saw
My Louis' face grow passionless and calm,
As one decreed by God to judge and slay.
I crept apart, yet could not help but gaze,
Because the thing was terrible to see.
For my dear lord, his face unstirred and cold,
Now touched him on the shoulder or the breast,
Then in the chest an inch deep as he shrank,
Till, with each wound, the traitor, shrinking back,
Felt the sloped margin crumble 'neath his feet,
Then wildly thrust, whereon the rapiers coiled
Like twin steel serpents, and the Duke's flew wide.
"My God!" I cried, "Save! Save him!" but my lord
In silence with his kerchief wiped his sword,
And coldly cast the good lace o'er the cliff.
Speechless, I saw the stiff knees giving way,
The long grass breaking in the hands' hard clutch,
Till on the brink — oh, that was terrible! —
A face — a cry — just "Marie!" that was all!
And then I heard my good lord sheathe his blade.
Ah, truly, that was very long ago,
And why, why would you have me tell the tale?
Sometimes at evening, underneath our oaks,
Here in our English home, I sit and think,

Stirred by the memory of a wild, white face.
Here come the boys you praised. My Louis'? No!
And this grave maid? These are my baby's babes!
You did not think I am a grand-dame. Well —
You 're very good to say so.

1880.

HOW LANCELOT CAME TO THE NUNNERY IN SEARCH OF THE QUEEN

THREE days on Gawain's tomb Sir Lancelot wept,
Then drew about him baron, knight, and earl,
And cried, "Alack, fair lords, too late we came,
For now heaven hath its own, and woe is mine:
But 'gainst the black knight Death may none avail.
I will that ye no longer stay for me.
In Arthur's realm I go to seek the Queen,
Nor ever more in earthly lists shall ride."
So, heeding none, seven days he westward rode,
And at the sainted mid-hour of the night
Was 'ware of voices, and above them all
One that he knew, and trembled now to hear.
Rose-hedged before him stood a nunnery's walls,
With gates wide open unto foe or friend.
Unquestioned to the cloister court he came,
And in the moonlight, on the balcony, saw
Beneath the arches nuns and ladies stand,
And in their midst a cowled white face he loved,
Whereat he cried aloud, "Lo, I am here!
Lo, I am here!— I, Lancelot, am here!
Would ye I came? I could not help but come."
Spake then the Queen, low-voiced as one in pain:

"Oh, call him here, I pray you call him here."
Then lit Sir Lancelot down, and climbed the stair,
And doffed his helm, and stood before the Queen.
But she that had great fear to see his face:
"Oh, sinless sisters, ye that are so dear,
Lo, this is he through whom great ills were wrought;
For by our love, which we have loved too well,
Is slain my lord and many noble knights.
And therefore, wit ye well, Sir Lancelot,
My soul's health waneth; yet through God's good grace
I trust, when death is come, to sit with Christ,
Because in heaven more sinful souls than I
Are saints in heaven; and therefore, Lancelot,
For all the love that ever bound our souls
I do beseech thee hide again thy face.
On God's behalf I bid thee straitly go,
Because my life is as a summer spent;
Yea, go, and keep thy realm from wrack and war,
For, well as I have loved thee, Lancelot,
My heart will no more serve to see thy face;
Nay, not if thou shouldst know love in mine eyes.
In good haste get thee to thy realm again,
And heartily do I beseech thee pray
That I may make amend of time mislived.
And take to thee a wife, for age is long."
"Ah no, sweet madam," said Sir Lancelot,
"That know ye well I may not while I breathe;
But as thou livest, I will live in prayer."
"If thou wilt do so," said the Queen, "so be.
Hold fast thy promise; yet full well I know
The world will bid thee back."—"And yet," he cried,
"When didst thou know me to a promise false?

Wherefore, my lady dame, sweet Guinevere,
For all my earthly bliss hath been in thee,
If thou wilt no more take of this world's joy,
I too shall cease to know the bliss of life.
I pray thee kiss me once, and nevermore."
"Nay," said the Queen, "that shall I never do.
No more of earthly lips shall I be kissed."
Then like to one stung through with hurt of spears,
Who stares, death-blinded, round the reeling lists,
At gaze he stood, but saw no more the Queen;
And as a man who gropes afoot in dreams,
Deaf, dumb, and sightless, down the gallery stairs
Stumbling he went, with hands outstretched for aid,
And found his horse, and rode, till in a vale
At evening, 'twixt two cliffs, came Bedevere,
And with his woesome story stayed the knight.
At this, Sir Lancelot's heart did almost break
For sorrow, and aboard his arms he cast,
And cried, "Alas! ah, who may trust this world!"

1886.

THE HILL OF STONES:

A LEGEND OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

We two, my guide and I, through dusty ways
And formal avenues of well pruned trees,
Went past the village and thy dark gray walls,
Antique, deserted Fontainebleau; and still
With talk of him the shade of whose despair
Lies on thy courtyard yet, we loitering
Strolled through the deeper wood, and found at last
A barren space that crowned a hill's green slope,
Where, lonely as a king, a single oak,
Crippled in boisterous battle with the winds,
And gay with leafy flattery of the spring,
Seemed like an old man, cheated suddenly
With some gay dream of childhood's tender hours.
"Here let us rest," he said, and casting down
His woodman's staff, set out upon the grass
Twin flasks of Léoville and fair white loaves;
There as at ease we lay, and ate and drank,
My roving gaze in pleasant wanderings went
Down the green hill, along the valley's range.
The noonday sun hung half asleep in heaven,
And in the drowsied wood no leaflet's stir
Broke the still shadows slumbering on the ground.

Adown the hill, beside a brook that lay
A silver thread, heat-wasted,— far below,
Gaunt rocks in wild confusion tumbled lay,
Thick strewn along the narrowing vale, and barred
The distant thickets with their broken lines.
High on the further hill, twin mount to ours,
A single slab, time-worn, imperial, towered,
And all around it cumbering the sod
A time-worn host of barren rocks was cast
Each upon each,— as after battle lie
The dead upon the dead, to war no more,—
Whilst over them the hot and curdled air
Shook in uneasy whirls that broke the crests
Of distant trees and hilltops far away.
In musing wonder tranced I lay and gazed
Down the cleft valley o'er the waste of stones,—
The while my comrade, stretched upon the grass,
Lay whistling cheerily his ballad gay
Of good king Dagobert; or smiling told,
With frequent urging, in his rough patois,
Some broken bit of legendary lore,
And at the last a story of these stones.

A thousand noisy years ago, 't is said,
Along yon silent vale at eventide
A bearded king, grown weary of the chase,
Rode thoughtful home, but pausing here awhile,
Said: " When life palls, and I no more can ride
With lance in rest, or smite with gleaming blade,
When sorrows sweeten the near cup of death,
Then in this valley's quiet I will build
A palace, where the wise and old shall come,
And none shall talk of what has been, and all

Shall ponder, with clear vision looking on
To that which is to be."
Then pensive still
He turned away, and westward rode again,
Whilst after him an hundred barons came,
And riding swiftly, starred at intervals
The dark wood spaces with their robes of gold.
Next morn at Fontainebleau the bearded king
Held, 'neath the oaks, his court, when suddenly
A young knight, breaking through the outer guard,
Leapt featly from his jaded horse and cried,
Like one whom some dream-wonder spurs to speech:
"Good Sire, last night a lonely man I slept
Upon the hill you love; and where at eve
The bald brown summit lay a dreary waste,
And where the sun of yesterday looked down
On utter solitude, and sowed the ground
With wild-eyed violets — O my liege, to-day
There stands a castle fair with courts and towers
And turrets tall and fretted pinnacles
Upgrown by night, in one still summer night,
As if fay-builded, and around it leap
A thousand soaring fountains, and the air
Reluctant from its bowered garden floats
Sweet with strange odors. Underneath a porch
Of leaf-carved masonry, I saw, my lord,
As peering through the thicket's fence I gazed,
The queen of women holding wondrous court
Of maidens only just less fair than she."
Then said the king: "The good knight's brain is crazed;

Or hath he dreamed? or do we live anew
An age of magic?"
"Nay," the knight replied;
"I dreamed it not;" and smiled his bearded lord,
While merry laughter shook the mailèd ring.
"Give me, good Sire, to seek again the hill,
And fill me with the beauty that doth glow
In her deep eyes, and either I will bring
This royal woman back again with me,
Or if there be delusion in my words,
The dream will break, and I ashamed shall come
To this fair court no more." Then as the king
In silence bent, he took his palfrey's rein,
And downward gazing parted wide the crowd,
And passed the yielding wood.
Whereon the king:
"The test is fair; 't is chivalrous and just
That no man follow him;" and so with this
He went alone, and was no more with men.
Along the valley up the tufted sward
By cold-eyed statues underneath an arch
Of swaying fountains silently he went,
And half dismayed the rosy hedges broke,
And saw the lady and her maiden court.
Then there was sweet confusion, and a maze
Of white and shining arms in wonder raised,
And low, quick, modest cries from girls who fled
For shelter in the thickets, or took flight
Behind their queenly mistress. She alone
Towered, red and angry, one foot forward set.
"O woman wonderful," he cried — and bent
Before the tempest of her stormy eyes,—
"Send me not forth alone for aye, to hold

Thy memory only like a dagger sharp
To my sad heart; more sweet by far were death."
"Go, sir," she cried; "what right hast thou in me?
Mine only is my beauty." "Nay," he urged,
"Save that God put them in the world with us,
What right have we in yonder wide estate
Of sun and sky and flower-haunted sod?"
"No man on earth is peer of mine," she said,—
And saying this her cold eyes fell on him.
Her cold eyes fell on him; and deadly pale,
Bereft of thought, as one who gropes along,
He turned and went, while scornful laughter rang
From briery thickets everywhere around,
And chased his quick uncertain steps, that brake
The garden paths, till on the lone hillside
A sudden coldness fettered limb and trunk,
And in his veins the liquid life grew still,
While form and feature shrunk, and, half-way down
On the drear mountain-side, a weight of stone
The knight at evening lay, to love no more.
Then quoth the waiting king as days went by:
"He hath not as he promised brought us back
The stately mistress of his fairy hall.
Who is there here, of all my lords, will seek
Yon magic palace, and with winsome wiles
And all the pleasant archery of love,
Fetch me this woman, captive of the heart?"
"And I, and I, and I," an hundred said;
And the sharp clangor of their shaken mail
Rang through the forest ways, as up they leapt.
So, one by one, as the cast die decreed,
They laughing went, and were no more with men.
But as the golden days of summer fled,

Thick-clustered stones upon the hillside marked
Where slept the flower of all that kingly court,
And heard no more the tread of dainty feet
Hail footfalls round them, when the mellow tones
Of music floating from the terraced lawns
Struck echoes from their stony forms that lay
To wait their brothers when the curse should fall.
And so it chanced, that as the hillside grew
Aghast with stony death, all living things
Its deadly boundaries fled, and man and beast
Turned from it ever with unquiet steps.
Yet now and then, when from a distant steep
The shepherd gazed, he saw some fated man
Climb with quick strides the hill, and through the stones
Depart from view; and looking then again,
Or hours or days thereafter, scared he saw
The same man, cold and palsied, issue forth
And reel and die, and smite the summer grass
With stony weight. And yet while men amazed
Stared, wondering that God and this could be,
The palace towers, ivy-curtained, stood
Unmoved and stern, as if a century long
Their breadth of shade, with each day's march, had crossed
The garden moats, and seen the lily buds
Unbosom tenderly to wild wind wooing
Each wanton morning of a hundred Junes;
Still ever through the silence of the night
A thousand fountains trembled high in air,
And not a breeze but rich as laden bee
Sailed from the garden, heavy with the freight
Of endless music, and the tender chime

Of cadenced voices, echoed high or low
From porch and hall and windowed gallery.

Again came June to lordly Fontainebleau,
And once again on field and woodland fell
The lazy lull of noontide drowsiness,
Where in cool caves of shadows slept the winds,
Whilst warm and still the moveless forest lay.
Therein betimes, at fitful intervals,
The quiet mystery of this noonday trance,
Distant and grave, a solemn anthem filled,
And, soaring lark-like through the listening leaves
That trembled with its sorrow, died away;
But in its place a hymn rose, sweet and clear,
Such as at evening, coming from the wells,
With balanced water-jars upon their heads,
The maidens sing.
And thus from leafy shades
A knight full-armed rode, singing as he went: —

In olden days did Christ decree
Twelve knightly hearts with him to be,
And bade them wear no armor bright
Save charity and conscience white.

And through all lands they went and came,
Not covetous of earthly fame,
And gave the alms of Christian cheer
To lowly serf and haughty peer.

For Christ they fought with word and prayer,
For Christ they died,— oh, birthright fair!
Sweet Mary Mother, grant to me
That I, like them, pure-hearted be.

Then, as the knight rode on through sun to shade,
And sang how good deeds, mightier than kings,

Are as the holy accolade of God,
And bid the poorest rise a knight of Christ,
From branch and thicket came the birds, and sailed
Around his silver casque, and carolling
Awoke the sleeping breezes, till he rode
With tossing plumes upon the open hill.
There all day long in silence wrapt, the knight
Knelt on the green turf gathering faith and strength;
And all day long the same sweet retinue
Of summer songsters circled round his head.
When fell the night he rose, and, stern and calm,
Unlaced his armor slowly, piece by piece,
Laid down his helmet and his spurs of gold,
Ungirt his sword, and cast its jewelled weight
Beside his spear upon the burdened grass.
Then all unarmed and weaponless, he strode
Adown the hill, and sad and silent wound
Its cumbering stones among, till by the brook
Kneeling he crossed himself, and stayed no more,
But through the night, white robed and tranquil, went,
Passed in among the wood of founts that shook
Their silvery leafage in the moonlight gray,
Crossed with quick step the flower-beds, and passed
Where gleaming statues sentinelled the path;
Then, while the mirth rose wildest, and the sound
Of merry music shook the stems he touched,
He broke the rose-hedge, and untroubled stood
Amidst the wonder of the magic court.
Grave, glancing right and left, quoth he aloud:
"The peace of God, which passeth other peace,
Be on ye ever,"— and so trembling stood,

Dazed by the mystery of half-seen limbs
And rosy secrets, chastened by the moon.
Swift moving through her shrinking court, the queen,
A head above them towering, flushed with wrath,
Shook from white neck and arms the roses red
That, ere he came, a hundred laughing girls
Showered from quick hands, which on a sudden checked,
Drooped with their flowery loads,— and " Sir," she cried:
" Dost dream, as others have, to woo us home? "
" Most near the holy love of God," he said,
" Is such deep worship as a knightly heart
Doth give in some one woman unto all;
For whatsoever hath love's sweet disguise
Should in the tender eye of woman win
The gentle estimate of charity."
" A priest," she cried,— and smote the ground and shook
The lingering roses from her fallen hair;
Upon the ground the good knight kneeling prayed:
"God grant," he murmured, "all my heart be pure;
Such love I give thee, woman, as thou hadst
For yonder stones, my brothers, they who lie
Awaiting God upon the mountain-side."
" Enough," she cried; " go, fool, and share with them
Their folly and their fate." And so on him
Her cool-eyed anger fell, and still and chill
In the white moonlight they too stood and gazed
Each on the other, steady, eye to eye,
And yet he went not, though through trunk and limb

The slow blood crept, and on his lip a prayer
Died in the saying.
"Thou shalt go," she cried;
And, bending, garnered from the flowery fence
A rosy handful. Then in haste cast back
The snowy cloak that drifted from her neck,
And crying once a shrill and gnarled phrase,
Smote with the roses red his startled face.
On brow and cheek the flying roses struck,
And fell not down again, for suddenly
Twin petals flashed to wings; and they who looked
Saw bud and blossom turned to flitting birds,
Which through the broken moonlight went and came,
And sang sweet carols round the white-robed knight.
This while the lady stood amazed and still
And all her court of wonder-fettered maids
Like silence kept for fear, till at the last
The good knight, marvelling, put out his hand,
And took the lady's finger-tips, and went
With knightly courtesy and whispered prayer
Along the garden paths. And as they passed,
Behind their steps the wind-tossed grasses shrunk,
The flowers drooped, the busy fountains ceased,
And vase and statue, fading into mist,
Went floating formless from the mountain-top.
Still on they moved, she like a lily bent,
And all her women slowly followed her.
"Here pause," he said, and on the middle slope
Her trembling maids fell moaning round their queen,
A silver ring upon the dark green turf.
"Behold, morn waketh," said the knight; "no more,

No more for you shall any morning wake;
I charge you look along yon valley drear."
Thereon she silent raised her head and gazed
Adown the hillside thick with deathful stones,
And felt in heart and vein the pulsing blood
Stand still and curdle. So, the hand he held
Stayed pointing down the valley, and he leapt
Across the ring of cold and moveless forms,
And walked in wonder down the mountain-side,
And she and they stayed waiting on the hill,
A tumbled heap of dreary rocks, that lay
About the statue of their stony queen.

1858.

THE CUP OF YOUTH

SCENE, A SEA BEACH NEAR RAVENNA.
MOONLIGHT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GASPAR.	GELOSA, his wife.
UBERTO.	EMILIA, his wife.
GALILEO.	

TIME, *circa* 1632.

SCENE I. GASPAR *and* GELOSA. GELOSA *playing with the sand.*

GELOSA (*letting the sand fall slowly through her fingers*). See, Gaspar, how I hold the hours of love,
Or bid the merry minutes flit away.

GASPAR. Time should be captive in those pretty hands,
With none to ransom him, had I my way.
Yet must I break the spell and hustle in
The rough world's business. Wherefore, little one,
This long delay? You lacked not courage once.

GELOSA. Still am I in the bondage of my youth;
All my life long I feared that silent man
Who came across the garden from the tower,
Ate, slept, or to and fro athwart the grass
Trod one same path with bended head and back,
And shunned all company with this lower world.

She whose proud love and gold alike he spent,
She who did love him as the worst are loved
By those sad hearts who best know how to love,
Got but few words and bitter; but for her
I had not cared to see his face again.

GASPAR. Men say his silence guards such fateful power
As makes yon stars the vassals of his will,
Turns baser metals into golden coin,
And wrings all secrets from the miser Time.

GELOSA. And yet he knew not that one summer night
A little maid — Gelosa was her name —
Had stolen out beneath his starry slaves
To learn the subtle alchemy of love
That turns all fates to gold, nor lacks the power
To prophesy the sweetness of to-morrow.
Methinks he knew but little, knowing not
What love will dare; or haply knew too much
For all the gentler uses of the world
When, like a landlord with too full an inn,
He thrust out Love, that ever might have been
The fairest guest his learning entertained.

GASPAR. Nor I more welcome. I could laugh to think
How patiently I took the beggar's "Nay"
He cast in scorn. "What! wed a landless squire,
Who spends in folly what he won in blood! —
None but a scholar wins my niece's lands."

GELOSA. My lands indeed; if certain tales be true,
He married them these many years ago.

GASPAR. Ay, and may keep them if he be but wise.
Fair over Arno tower my castle walls,
With vine-clad hillsides rolling to the plain.
Nothing I owe you save your own sweet self.
A scholar, I! Not troubled will you be
By reason of my studies. I shall learn
Love from your eyes; your lips shall be my law,
And if their ripe decisions please me not,
The fount of justice at its very source
I shall know how to bribe. I brought you here
Because you willed it,— ay, and save for that
I care but little how this errand thrives.

GELOSA. Kiss, kiss away the thoughts that trouble me;
The lapsing days will bring some pleasant chance.

GASPAR. Who trusts that multitude of counsellors
Wins sad unrest.

GELOSA. Oh, let my errand wait.
How very silent is the sea to-night!
The little waves climb up the shore and lay
Cool cheeks upon the ever-moving sands
That follow swift their whispering retreat.
I would I knew what things their busy tongues
Confess to earth.

GASPAR. Let me confess you, sweet!
Tell me again you love me.

GELOSA. Small my need.
'T is in my eyes; 't is on my lips; my heart
Beats to this music all the long day through.
A bird am I that have one single note
For song, for prayer, for thanks, for everything.

GASPAR. You cannot know how passing sweet it is
To change the camp, the field, the storms of war,
For this and you; to watch the gray moon wane
And see the slumbrous sea leap here and there
To silver dreams.

GELOSA. The hand of time seems stayed,
And joy to own the ever constant hours,
So full of still assurance is the night.
Love hath the quiet certainty of heaven,
Rich with the promise of unchanging years.
[*Voices are heard near by.*

GASPAR. Hush, my Gelosa! Who be these that come?

[*Enter* GALILEO *and* UBERTO, *who sit down among the dunes close by.*

GELOSA. My uncle and his friend, the Florentine.

GASPAR. Hark you, he speaks your name. He said, "Gelosa."
He called you — was it Gelosetta, love?
Why, I shall call you Gelosetta too.

GELOSA. Distance and absence leave him this one friend,
A scholar grave, and gentle as the gentlest.

GASPAR. And that is Galileo! I recall
One day in Florence walking with the Duke,
A man most studious of his fellow-men,
We saw this scholar wandering to and fro
Intent of gaze where Giotto's campanile

Athwart the plaza casts its length of shade.
The Duke had speech with him. A serious face,
With eyes that seemed to search beyond the earth,
Large, open, steady, like Luini's saints.

GELOSA. More sweet than mine?

GASPAR. I 'll tell you when 't is day.
A mighty student of bright eyes am I;
Now there I 'll match my science with the best.
Those Florentines, who never want for wit
To label love or hate, say he 's moon-mad,
And hath for mistresses the starry host
That wink at him by night.

GELOSA. Not Solomon
Had half so many. Yet for earthly love
He lacks not time nor honest appetite;
He never starved his heart to feed his head.
Hush! now he speaks again. The time may serve
To learn my uncle's mood.

GALILEO. This niece of yours —

UBERTO. Not ever greatly mine. The wayward child
Grew to the wilful woman, ignorant,
Untrained, and wild, a dreamer by the sea,—
Nor hers the housewife's knowledge. I have lived
Companionless of nobler intercourse,—
As to a friend I speak,— my wife wrapped up
In household cares and tendance of the poor,
Death busy with my manhood's friends. I tread
An ever lonelier road.

GALILEO. So seem all ways
To him who, yearning for too distant good,
Sees not the sweetness of the common path.
Life hath two hands for those who fitly live:
With one it gives, with one it takes away;
The willing palm still finds the touch of love,
And he alone has lost the art to live
Who cannot win new friends. Unwise are they
Who scorn the large relationship of life.
Yon restless sea, the sky, the bird, the flower,
The laugh of folly, and the ways of men,
The woman's smile, the hours of idleness,
The court, the street, the busy market-place,—
All that the skies can teach, the earth reveal,—
Are wisdom's bread. Alas! the common world
Hath lessons no philosophy can spare;
The tree that ever spreads its leaves to heaven
Casts equal anchors 'neath the soil below.
With man it is as with the world he treads:
No little stone of yonder pebbled beach
Could cease to be, and this great rolling orb
Feel not its loss. Enough of this to-night.
Count me your gains a little. Years have gone
Since last we met: what good things have they brought?

UBERTO. To-morrow I will tell you all. To-night
My mind is ill at ease; come, let us go,
But, as my love is valued by your own,
Speak not again of that unthankful child.

GALILEO. And yet I loved her. Have it as you will.

[*Exeunt* GALILEO *and* UBERTO.

GELOSA. O Gaspar, said I not that age was hard?
Be but your youth as kind.

GASPAR. Almost I thank
The misery that doubly sweetens love.
Strange seemed my life to him. To me, as strange
This corner-pickled shrivel of a man,
That all things dreaming never waked enough
To win the sanity of open eyes.
One day in Rimini, before a mirror,
So near I stood, my breath the image blurred.
Duke Francis, laughing, o'er my shoulder gazed;
Said I was like some men he knew, and went,
And would not read the riddle. Now 't is clear.
The man that hath no mirror save himself
Blurs the clear image conscience shows us all.
Now for a schoolless, helmet-dinted head,
The guess is not so bad.— What, tears again?
Tears for this man who in your childhood scorned
Its glad prerogatives of love and trust?
A thoughtless falcon, bold and wild of wing,
Like to my lover-self, had better kept
God's pledge to childhood.

GELOSA. Nay, no tears have I
For him who cost me many. But for her,
The simple, kindly dame who had no will
That was not his,— I am more sad for her,
Because she never learned the woman's art
To traffic with her sadness. Yet had she
A childless youth; the children of old age,
Love, solace, cheerful days of quietness,
Dead as the little ones she never knew.

Though sad at best the husbandry of years,
Time in the happy face no furrow cuts
That is not wholesome; but the loveless hours
Of uncompanioned sorrow and neglect
Make records sore with shame as are the scars
A master's whip leaves on the beaten slave.
Has life no answering scourge for them that sin?

GASPAR. For less than this, ay, for a moment's wrong,
I have seen men die young.

GELOSA. Come, let us go.
The night has lost its grace. These memories
Serve but to stir dead hates. To bed,— to bed.
Like his, my mind is very ill at ease;
I would his hurt were equal to my own.

SCENE II. *Garden of a villa near the sea and bordering on a road. Enter* UBERTO, *who walks to and fro. Night of the day after the last act.*

UBERTO. For gold, for lands, for any bribe of power
The soldier wastes the substance of the poor,
Sets ravage free and spills the innocent blood,
Yet sleeps as soundly. Shall I hesitate,
Checked by the memory of an outworn love,
A thoughtless woman and a foolish girl?
My friend — but he has won the laurel crown.
Dim continents of thought before me lie;
Their harvests wait the vigor of the scythe,
While in my heart the tardy blood of age
Unequal throbs. The mind, as tremulous
As these thin hands, has lost its certain grasp;

Pass, ye weak phantasies that bar my way,—
Children of habit,— I will do this thing!

Enter EMILIA.

EMILIA (*aside*). Now help me, Mary Mother, in my need.
Perhaps some memory of our joyous youth —

UBERTO. What, not abed?

EMILIA. I cannot sleep of late.
As if life were not long enough, the days
Live through the night, and mock with time's excess.

UBERTO. Why vex my soul with that of which each hour
Tells the sad tale?

EMILIA. Let us forget, Uberto!
Just half a century gone, when you and I,
Just fifty years ago this very night,
Walked 'neath the flowering locust, how I blessed
The kindly shade that hid my blushing cheek.
Not redder was the moon that night of May.

UBERTO. Still shall it mock the cheek of other loves
When you and I are dead. Oh, cruel time!
You lost the plaything of a pretty face; —
What was your loss to mine? What comfort lies
In useless babble o'er a squandered past?
Lo, when the eager spirit, worn with toil,
Has gathered knowledge, won its lordliest growth,
This robber comes to plunder memory

And lash with needless anguish to the grave.
We scorn the miser who in death laments
The gold he cannot carry; let us jest
At him whose usury of knowledge stops.

EMILIA. How know you that it doth? To me it seems
As if no office of our mortal frame
Has more the signet of immortal use
Than just this common gift of memory.
Forgive the thoughts that come I know not whence,—
I think our Galileo said it once,—
The ghosts that haunt the peaceful hours of night
Are not more unaccountable of man
Than the dead thoughts of life that, at a touch,
A taste, an odor, rise, we know not whence,
To scare us with the unforgotten past.
Your knowledge is not like the miser's gold,
For this world's usage only. Yet, perchance,
'T is like in this, that what it was on earth,
Self-ful, or helpful of another's pain,
May set what interest on that gathered hoard
The soul falls heir to in a world to come.

UBERTO. Alas, were I but sure that after death
I still should carry all life's nobler seed
To ripen largely under other skies,
I should not mourn at death.

EMILIA. Why is it, friend,
That I, for whom this life so little holds,
Should in its cup of emptied sweetness find
The pearl content, and with calm vision see

The stir of angel wings 'neath death's black cloak?
And life, ah, life might still be sweet to me!
O husband, had you been as some have been,
We might have lived a length of tranquil days,
With love slow moving through its autumn-time
To merge in loving friendship, and at last
To find the cloistered peace of patient age,
Tranquil and passionless, and so have walked
Like little children through life's wintry ways
To meet what fate the kindly years decreed.

UBERTO. Alas, the best is ever to be won!
There is no rose but might have been more red,
There is no fruit might not have been more sweet,
There is no sight so clear but sadly serves
To set the far horizon farther still.
[*Voices are heard on the road back of them.*

EMILIA (*aside*). Heart of my hearts! It is the little one!
My Gelosetta! Will he know the voice?

GELOSA (*on the road as she goes by with* GASPAR).
Can the rosebud ever know
Half how red the rose will grow?
Can the May-day ever guess
Half the summer's loveliness?

UBERTO. What voice is that?

EMILIA. Some wandering village girl.

UBERTO. No, 't was Gelosa's.

EMILIA. Would indeed it were!
Ah, that were joy! Alas, 't is but the girl
I helped last winter, one the plague cast out
With other Florentines. (*Aside.*) Would I could see!

UBERTO. Come back again to drain our meagre purse
Ay, there 's the man,— a woman and a man.

A man's voice sings.

'T is better to guess than to see,
'T is better to dream than to be.
The best of life's loving
Is lost in the proving,
'T is better to dream than to be.
The joy of love's sweetness
Is lost with completeness,
'T is better to dream than to be.

EMILIA. A pair of lovers! She has found her mate.

UBERTO. Already doth your cynic lover sing
The death and funeral of love and trust.
Thrice happy these with wingless instincts born.
Perhaps is best the woman's ordered life,
Market and house, the husband and the child.

EMILIA. Mother of God! and I that have no child!

UBERTO. St. Margaret! but you women-folk are tender.

Behind a hedge GASPAR *and* GELOSA, *while* UBERTO *continues.*

Forget my haste, Emilia; all my mind
Dwells on the nearness of one fateful hour.

EMILIA. Again the dream that through these weary years
Has turned your life from God, and home, and me,—
To win for you that doubtful cup of youth.
Think yet, Uberto, on the thing you do;
It cannot be that I, grown drear and old,
The very death-tide oozing round my feet,
Shall see you glad and young. It cannot be
Earth holds for me that agonizing hour.

[UBERTO *remains silent.*

GASPAR (*to* GELOSA *apart*). No answer hath he. Now speak you to him.
It seems the wise man hath no wiser dreams
Than fools are heir to.

GELOSA. Heard you all he said?

GASPAR. Ay, all I cared to hear. Come, let us go.
Seek you his wife alone. Forget this fool.

GELOSA. Didst hear, my Gaspar? Can it be he owns
A cup which, drained, shall fetch his youth again?
Men say the thing has been in other days.
To leave her old and withered were to add
A crime, unthought of yet, to sin's dark list.

GASPAR. Less base it were to stab her where she stands.

[*Exit* EMILIA *silently.*

GELOSA. Hush! she has left him,— left him. Were I she,
I would crawl out at midnight to his tower.
Deep would I drain the damnèd cup of life,
And wander back a maiden fair and young,

To curse his age with jealous misery.
Or I would kill him as he lay asleep,
And keep him old forever,— that would I.

GASPAR. Now here 's a wicked lady. Should I chance
To fall in love with larger length of days,
I shall be very careful of my diet.
Comes now the Florentine. The play were good,
Were you not in the plot. They say in Florence
The Pope will have it that this man of stars
Shall spread no gossip as to worlds that roll,
Nor play at Joshua with the Emperor Sun.
To be so wise that all the world 's a fool
Might breed uneasy life.

GELOSA. Perhaps; and yet,—
You know we little women will have thoughts,—
I was but thinking that for one to own
A soul for actions great beyond compare,
A mind for thoughts that have the native flight
Of eaglets rising from the parent nest,
To soar so high they cast no earthward shade,
Might bring a very childhood of content.

GASPAR. There 's ever music in your Umbrian heart
That lived where Dante died. Yet vain the thought;
For me the world may skip, or stop, or turn
Back-somersaults as likes the blessed Pope.
Where got you, love, these riddles of the brain,
These comments on a world you never knew?

GELOSA. A certain soldier taught me. Ah, you smile!

To greatly love is to be greatly wise.
God were less wise were He not also love.
Ah, there 's a riddle only love can read!

Enter GALILEO. *To* UBERTO, *still seated.*

GALILEO. Far have I sought you through the ilex grove,
Among Emilia's roses, in your tower.

UBERTO. My tower — you saw —

GALILEO. Saw nothing. (*Aside.*) He distrusts me.

UBERTO. Forgive me. You shall see, shall hear, to-night.

GALILEO. Those many years that I, a jocund lad,
To you, my elder, turned for counsel, help,
Came back to me to-day. You were more kind
Than brothers are. Ah, happy, studious hours!
What was the Pope to me, or I to him?
A cardinal was as the farthest star,
Outside the orbit of my hopes and fears.
I came to you to share some idle days,
To get again within your life of thought,
To question and be questioned.

UBERTO. Wherefore not?

GALILEO. A messenger who followed me with haste
Bids me to Rome to answer as I may.
My sin you know.

UBERTO. What answer can you make?

GALILEO. Alas, it moves! This ever-patient globe
Moves, with the Pope and me; would move without.
Could I but summon God to answer them!
If He has whispered in my listening ear
This secret, guarded since the morn of time,
How shall I say I know not it nor Him?
A man may love or not, rejoice or not,
May hate or not, but what he thinks is sped
In word-winged arrows of eternal flight.

UBERTO. And you, the archer, you who loosed the string,
What harm if you should say this was not yours? —
This troubling doctrine long ago was born;
Sages in Egypt knew it. Or, at need,
Say that the world is stiller than a snail.
Say what you will, but live to draw anew
That bow of thought which you alone can draw.

GALILEO. Death is more wise than any wisest thought
The living man can think; death is more great
Than any life; and as for that stern hour
I meet in Rome next week, I know not now
How I shall judge my judge.

UBERTO. The fate I fear,
I fear for you, but would not for myself.
Ay, at this hour would I change lives with you;
For come what may, chains, prison, rack, or axe,
You will have lived so largely that no fate
Can pain your age with sense of unfulfilment.
But I have all things willed, yet nothing done.

GALILEO. I cannot think your solitary years
Have won us nothing, as you seem to say.
My hours are few and I go hence to-morrow
Perhaps no more to hear a friendly voice,
Or guess the starry secrets of the night.

UBERTO. Be patient with me. Many a year ago,
At twilight walking by the darkened sea,
The sudden glory of a broadening thought
Smote me with light as if through doors cast wide
To one in darkness prisoned. Then I saw
Dimly, as if at dusk, vast open space
Of things long guessed, but waiting fuller light.
What could I but despair? The hand and brain
No longer did my errands. There was set
A task for youth and vigor. Steadily
I gave my age to win the gift of youth,
That youth might help my quest.
That charm I sought
Which vexed the soul of old philosophy.
I won it, friend! To-night I drain this cup.
Like autumn leaves the withered years shall fall,
And sudden spring be mine. With wisdom clad,
With knowledge, not of youth, assured of time,
I shall speed swiftly to my certain goal.
The midnight calls my steps to yonder tower,
Where youth, the bride, awaits my joy's delay.
You have my secret. Oh, my God, if youth,
This second youth, should mock me like the first,
And bring no larger gain!

GALILEO. In this wild search
Great minds have perished. Where you think to win,—

In this the masters failed. Their wasted thoughts
Are in huge volumes scattered. It may be.
The strange is only what has never been,
And every century gives the last the lie.
But if 't is so, there 's that within your cup
Might stay the wiser hand. Ay, if 't is so!

UBERTO. If? if 't is so? It is! Not vain the work
That filled these longing years. For no base end.
These wasting vigils and these anxious days.
The gains I win shall lessen human pain.
One re-created life to man shall bring
Uncounted centuries in the gathering sum.

GALILEO. I too am of that sacred guild whose creed,
Before Christ died or Luke the healer lived,
Taught temperance, honor, chastity, and love.
I neither doubt the harvest nor the power
To reap its glorious fruit. And yet — and yet —
If the strong river of your flowing life
You shall turn back to be again the brook,
Is 't natural to think 't will float great ships,
Or with its lessened vigor turn the wheel?
Enough of me. I go to meet my fate.
Would I could stay!

UBERTO. Ah! when in Pisa's dome
You watched the lamp swing constant in its arc,
You gave to man another punctual slave,
And bade it time for us the throbbing pulse;
Joyful I guessed the gain for art and life.
Not that frail English boy Fabricius taught,
Not sad Servetus, nor that daring soul,

Our brave Vesalius, e're had matched your power
To read the riddles of this mortal frame.
And then you left us. Would our strange machine
Had kept your toil, and cheated yon fair stars!

GALILEO. We do but what we must. Some instinct guides.
To-night, when all the morrow world seems dim
And life itself a thing of numbered hours,
With clearing vision still for you I doubt.
Life hath its despot laws. You more than I
Know all their tyrant rigor. Tempt it not,
Lest failure, anguish, lurk within the cup.
Think sanely of this venture; let it pass.
Fill full, God helping, all the time He leaves.
Set 'gainst the darkness of death's nearing hour
In wholesome light all human action shines.
This dream is childlike; you will wake to tears.
Ask of your life if you have life deserved.
What did you with the gift? You had of it
All that another hath, or long or short.
Not time, but action, is the clock of man.
I should go happier hence if I could set
Your fatal cup aside. Nay, sorrow not;
Thank God for me. I have not vainly lived.
Truth have I served, and God, in serving her:
That heritage is deathless as Himself.
Something the thinker of the poet hath;
Our Dante was no mean philosopher:
With prophet eyes I see a freer day,
When thought shall mock at Kaiser and at Pope.
How can they think to chain the viewless mind,
Which is the very life within the life,

And in the irresponsible hours of sleep
Brings thought unto fruition? Yea, ethereal!
Of all God's mysteries most near to Him;
Instinctively creative, like the woman,
Pledged by conception's joy to labor's toil.
Grieve not for me. All that is best shall live.
There is no rack for thought; no axe, no block,
Can silence that.

UBERTO. But what, dear friend, if I
Should bid you laugh at pope or cardinal?
Take you this cup of mine. Take this and live.
In youth's disguise lie safely, freedom, life.

GALILEO (*aside*). Not stranger in its orbit moves my world
Than man, its habitant. Why, here is one
Could squander years and cheat a woman's love,
Yet turn to offer this. Not I, indeed!
(*Aloud.*) Life has been very dear to me, Uberto,
For that it has and that it has not been.
How many in their tender multitude
The cobweb ties of friendship, labor, love,
I knew not till this cruel storm of fate
Did thread them thick with jewels numberless.
And yet life owns no bribe would bid me back
To live it o'er anew. I can but thank you.

UBERTO. Is it only they who have no life of worth
Would live it o'er again?

GALILEO. That is not all.
Vainly and long would we have talked of it
In other days. No life is what it seems.

If thought were man's whole company in life,
Who would not live it o'er? But from our side
Friends, comrades, fall and torture us with loss.
Who is there born would will to live again
Such anguish as the happiest have known?
This is the heart's half only; more there is.
But the night wastes. [*Rises.*

UBERTO. To-morrow you go hence?
Write me from Rome. Before the day is spent
I shall have won or lost. Good-night, good friend.
[*Exeunt both.*

GASPAR. These learned folks are not more gay to hear
Than Lenten priests. I gave their riddles up
This half-hour since. And you?

GELOSA. I heard it all.
Love, friendship, reason, all alike are vain.

GASPAR. Had I a moment in his secret den,
That draught of his should give eternal life
To weeds that rot around the moat below.
[GELOSA *whispers.*
The jest were good. Is there no peril in it?

GELOSA. None, Gaspar. Wait for me beside the gate.
Quick, ere the chance be lost! 'T is past eleven.
Oh, he will like my jest. Come, this way, come!

SCENE III. *Stairway of the tower, where* EMILIA *sits weeping at the door of the astrologer's laboratory, a small lamp beside her.*

EMILIA. Though he should kill me, I will wait for him.
To die were easy, if to die would stay
His hand from wrong. Alas! too sure it is,
Alive or dead, I nothing am to him.
Who is it comes? Say, is it you, Uberto?

GELOSA *comes up the stairs.*

GELOSA. Oh, mother, it is I, your little one!
Friends, husband, wealth, all that life hath to give,
Are mine to-day. Come to my Tuscan home.
The flowers you love watch for you on the hills.
My children shall be yours. My good lord waits
Our coming at the gate. Leave, leave this man.

EMILIA. I cannot, child.

GELOSA. Then will I talk with him.
For this we came from Florence. Once again,
I would be sure his will is as of old.
Beside the tower my good lord waits for me.

EMILIA. Vain is your errand, child.

GELOSA. Yet must I try;
(*Aside.*) The equal years give me at last my turn.
(*Aloud.*) Is the door barred?

EMILIA. Nay, but I dare not enter.

GELOSA. Not long the thing you fear shall vex your soul.
Come with me. Spill the cursèd cup, or wreck
With wholesome fire this chamber of your fear.

EMILIA. Who has betrayed his secrets?

GELOSA. He himself.
Hid by the ilex hedge I heard it all.
Wept with you, for you; heard your tender plea.
Of other make am I. Give me your ring.
You used to say I had your sister's voice,
Twin to your own.

EMILIA. What would you say to him?
What do to him? You cannot mean him ill.

GELOSA. Not I, indeed. Hark! there's a voice without.
Trust me a little. Quick! the ring, the ring!
No other hope is left. Give me the ring!

EMILIA. You will not harm him? I shall have it back?
He gave it me the day we were betrothed.

GELOSA. A goodly half of this world's misery
Is born of woman's patience. Could you live
From that to this?

EMILIA. What can a woman else?

GELOSA. What else? Naught now. The ring, and have no fear!

[*Takes her hand and removes the emerald ring, which is yielded reluctantly.*

Alas, poor withered hand! how dear thou art,
And sweet with use of bounty!
Quick, the lamp:
And wait for me upon the upper stair. [*Urges her hastily.*

EMILIA. Nay, tell me more. I am afraid, Gelosa.

GELOSA. Of me who love you? There, a kiss; good-by.
And stir not, if you love or him or me.

[GELOSA *opens the door, and with the lamp in her hand enters the room.* EMILIA *ascends the upper staircase.*

There may be too much sweetness in a woman.
A little soured on the shadowed side
My Tuscan peaches are.
Now what a den!
A winter wealth of kindling in old books.
Bones, and a skull — gay vipers, slimy things,
A crocodile that hath an evil eye. [*Crosses herself.*
And dust, ye Saints! but here 's a long day's work.

[*Lifts a bell glass from a small Venice goblet containing a transparent fluid.*

Around the rim twin serpents writhe in coils.
[*Reads the inscription below them.*

Ex morte vitam. Life is child of death.
Is this in truth the draught shall make man young?
Now should I drink, it were a merry jest
To find myself a baby tumbling round,
Athirst for mother's milk. Not I, indeed.

[*Empties cup on the floor, and refills it with water. Blows out the light and veils herself.*

The moon is quite enough. Will he be long?
Now, kindly uncle, for this pretty play.

[*She conceals herself in a corner. Enter* UBERTO.

UBERTO. At last, 't is near. The stairs my constant feet
Have worn with many steps more toilsome grow.
The hounds of time are on their panting prey;
I wait no longer. No man owns to-morrow.
To-morrow is the fool's to-day. Ah, soon
I shall go gaily tripping down the hill,
Glad as a springtide swallow on the wing,
A man new born.— Nay, this is like to death.
Why should I falter here? We both are old.
Soon in the common way our steps would part.
And to be young; to feel the sinews strong,
Eye, ear, and motion quick, the brain all life,—
The visions of my manhood round me whirl,
White limbs, red lips, and love's delirious dream,
The passion kiss of wine, the idle hours
Unmissed from youth's abounding heritage.
Off, off, ye brutal years that gnaw our age!
Come, joy! come, life!— life at the full of flood!

[*Pauses.*

Birth is not ours. We are, and that is all.
Death is not ours. We die, and that is all.
This stranger birth that waits upon my will,
Ay, this is mine alone. The herd of men
Are born and die. One sole ignoble lot
Awaits them all. This none can share with me.
Auspicious planets shine upon the hour.

[*Takes the hour-glass.*

Swift waste the sands. So much of age is left.
Uncounted memories of things long lost
Leap to my view, as if to one who stands
Beside the waif-thronged surges of the deep,
And sees its dead roll passive to his feet,
Its pearls, its weeds, its wrecks.
So let it end.
[*Fills up the glass with wine.*
Nor fear, nor friend, nor love shall hinder me.
[*Drinks.*
Will it be swift? or will the change be like
The wonder work of spring?
[*Lights a small lamp, and examines his face in a mirror.*
A ghastly face!
Is this the earthquake agony of change?
[GELOSA, *still veiled, advances.*

GELOSA. Change that will never come. You that would cheat
A life-worn love of company to death,
Take the stern answer of a tortured soul.
You drained my cup of life, and cast aside
The poor mean vessel. I, Emilia, stole
Your cup of life. Mine is the youth you craved,
Mine the gay dream of girlhood's rosy joy,
Mine once again the wooing lips you kissed
When you and I were young. Ah, sweet is youth!
Go, thieving dotard, to a loveless grave!

[UBERTO *staggers forward, with the lamp in his hand.*

UBERTO. My wife, Emilia? No, not my Emilia.

GELOSA. Nay, touch me not! And is your memory
dead?
Why, even I some dim remembrance keep.
Take back this ring, this pledge of endless love.
[UBERTO *receives it.*

UBERTO. Her ring — your ring — Emilia! — Lost,
lost, lost!
Life, honor, fame, and youth. Emilia, wife,
Speak kindlier to me. Speak, oh, speak again!
Your voice is like an echo from the past.—
What devil taught you this? [*Advances.*

GELOSA. Off, off, old man!
What has a girl to do with palsied age?
I 'll be a daughter to your feebleness,
And fetch your crutch, and set you in the sun,
And get me lovers kin to me in years.

UBERTO. Black Satan take your kindness! Yet
have I
The strength to kill you! You shall die for this!
[*Seizes her.*

GELOSA. What?— feeble fool!
[*Pushes him away; he falls and remains on the floor.*

UBERTO. This is not my Emilia.
Help, help, without there! Help!

GELOSA. Come in,— come in!
Well have I paid a fool with folly's coin.

EMILIA *enters and runs to lift her husband.*

EMILIA. Ill have you done, and cruel I have been.
Oh, you have slain my love!

GELOSA. Not I, in truth.

UBERTO. Out, lying baggage! Now I know you well.

GELOSA. Come you with me, dear mother of my love.
Leave we this base old man. My husband waits.

EMILIA. Get hence! I never loved you. He knew best.
Pray God I see no more the wicked face
That cheated him and me. Begone, I say!
[*Exit* GELOSA.

1888.

MY LADY OF THE ROSES

At Venice, while the twilight hour
  Yet lit a gray-walled garden space,
  I saw a woman fair of face
Pass, as in thought, from flower to flower.
  The roses, haply, something said,
  For here and there she bent her head,
Till, startled from their hidden nest
In the covert of her breast,
  Blushes rose, like fluttered birds,
  At those naughty rosy words.
One need not wise as Portia be
To guess love held her heart in fee.
  Prudently a matron rose
  For her confidence she chose:
Whispering, she took its breath,
And, for what its fragrance saith,
  Smiling knelt, and kissed it twice;
  Caught it, held it, kissed it thrice.
Ah! her kiss the rose had killed;
  Wrecked, in tender disarray
  On the ground its petals lay,
All its autumn fate fulfilled.
  Swiftly from her paling face
  Fell the rosy flush apace.

Had her kiss recalled a bliss
Life for evermore should miss?
  Had there been a fatal hour
  When false lips had hurt the flower
Of love, and now its sad estate
She saw in that dead rose's fate?
  Who may know? A little while
  She lingered with a doubtful smile;
Took then a younger rose, whose slips
The garden knew, and with her lips
  Its color matched. What gracious words
  It said might know the garden birds,—
Something, perchance, that liked her well;
But roses kiss, and never tell.

  What confession, what dear boon,
  Heard that ruddy priest of June?
Was it a mad gypsy-rose
Fortunes eager to disclose,
  Gravely whispering predictions
  Rich with love's unending fictions,
Saying nonsense good to hear,
Like a pleasant-mannered seer?
  Gypsy palms are crossed with gold,
  But my lady, gaily bold,
In the antique coin of kisses
Paid for prophecy of blisses;
  And, to make assurance sure,
  This conspirator demure
Murmured, in a pretty way,
What her prophet ought to say.
  Low she laughed, and then was gone;
  My pleasant little play was done.

Alone I sit and muse. Below,
Black gondolas glide to and fro,
  Like shadows that have stolen away
  From centuried arch and palace gray.
Then, as if out of memory brought,
  The sequel of my garden masque
Comes silently, by fancy wrought,—
  A gift I had not cared to ask.

Lo! where the terraced marble ends,
  Barred by the sweetbrier's scented bound,
The lady of my dream descends,
  And day by day the garden ground
Her footsteps know; with lingering gait,
She wanders early, wanders late,
  Or, sadly patient, on the lawn
Each day renews her gentle trust,
  When, from the busy highway drawn,
Float high its curves of sunlit dust.
  The children of her garden greet
  With counsel innocent and sweet
  The coming of her constant feet.
She whispers, and their low replies
Bring gladness to her lips and eyes;
  She will no other company;
  For her the flowers have come to be
  All of life's dim reality.
Purple pansies, gold embossed,
That in love had once been crossed,
Murmur, We have loved and lost;
  And the cool blue violets
  Sigh, We wait for life's regrets.
Thistles gray, beyond the fence,

Mutter prickly common-sense;
While the lilies, pale and bent,
Say, We too sinned, are penitent;
Only that can bring content.
Red generations of the rose
Unheeded passed to death's repose;
The peach upon the crumbling wall,
With springtide bloom and autumn fall,
No proverb had to foster fear,
No time-worn wisdom brought her near.
The willows o'er two noisy brooks,
In marriage come to sober mood,
Were but green slips, that eve of May;
Now, underneath their shade she looks,
And smiling says, "Time must be rude,
To keep him thus so many a day."
They tell her he is dead! "Ah! nay,"
She answers; "he but rode away,
And he will come again in May.
And I can wait," she says, and stands
With roses in her thin white hands.
Childlike, with innocent replies,
She meets the world. Wide open lies
Her book of life; Time turns the leaves,
Like each to each, because she grieves
Nor less nor more, save when in fear,
On one dark eve of all the year,
Dismayed lest love's divine distress
Be dulled by time's forgetfulness.

Venice, *June* 1891.

HOW THE POET FOR AN HOUR WAS KING

Once in á garden space, Saädi saith,
I came upon a tower, where within
There lay a king imprisoned until death
Should set him free; and thinking deep of sin,
And those who took its madness to and fro
Below the dead hope of these prison bars,
I saw the thoughtless stream of pleasure flow
Till evening, and the sad reproachful stars
Loosed a great sorrow on me for this king
To whom in other days I joyed to sing.
Himself had trained himself to noble use
Of that great instrument, a man; abuse
Of power he knew not; never one
So served victorious virtue. Then there came
Defeat and ruin. Now no more the sun
Shall see again his face who reckoned fame
As but an accident of righteous deeds.
Thus evening found me thinking how exceeds
Man's strangest dream, what Allah wills for him,
Till through the shadows of the twilight dim
I heard the gray muezzin call to prayer.
Upon the sands I knelt alone, and there
Entreated Allah till the middle hour.

Among the palms that were around the tower
Came, as if pitiful, the nightingale,
And sang and sang as if 't were sin to fail;
Whilst I who loved this great soul come to naught
Stayed wondering if any solace brought
The happy song that knows not pain of thought.
But then I heard above me, clear and strong,
The king's voice rising gather force of song,
Till from the prison wall its tameless power
Triumphant rang, as in some doubtful hour
Of angry battle or when from retreat
It called again the shame of flying feet.
Now like a war drum rolling far away
Its stormy rhythms died. No voice may say
Its after-sweetness, for, as drops a bird
That high in air hath on a sudden heard
Its little ones below, and surely guessed
The lonely sadness of the yearning nest,
Fell earthward pitiful the singer's verse,
Cradled the many griefs of man, the curse
Of pain, of sin, and in its soothing rhyme
Rocked into peace these petty woes of time,
Till I, who would have given a caliph's gold
For consolation, was myself consoled.
Musing, I said, "Lo! I will be this king,
Because a poet can be anything,
And may inhabit for a wilful hour
A maiden heart, or haunt a dewy flower,
Or be the murdered, or the murderer's hate."
I called to mind all knowledge, small or great,
Men had of him who sang, when his estate
Knew power and its danger. How he ruled
A wayward race I knew; how sternly schooled

His gentleness to give large justice sway;
How helped the kindly arts of peace, and gay,
And masterful of all that makes life sweet,
The jewel love set in this crown complete.
These, and much other gathered up from thought,
I took — and lo, how strange! A moment
brought
The whole to oneness, as when on a glass
The sun-rays fall, and bent together pass,
And glowing, flash a point of burning light;
So, for a time I was the king that night.

A king was I,— a king of Allah's birth,
In one brief hour I lived long years of earth.
I broke the robber tribes who vexed with wrong
My peaceful folk. Yea, as the simoon strong
That hurls the sands of death, in will and deed
A king I rode. Then saw my people bleed
My state fall from me, and a brutal fate
Wreck law and justice; with a tranquil face
Beheld die out of life its joy and grace,
And quick death busy with whate'er I loved —
All these I saw, but with a heart unmoved,
And marvelled at myself, as in a dream
A man hath wonder when his visions seem
Fitting and true to sense. And so erelong,
Considering what fault had let the wrong
O'ercome the right, I lost myself in song.

Am I the potter? Am I the clay?
Allah, Thou knowest! Soft and gray
Fall the curling shreds away.
Lo, the noiseless feet of years

Swift the rhythmic treadle ply;
Hath the potter doubts and fears?
Is the clay kept soft with tears?
Still the busy wheel doth fly.
He is the potter, I am the clay;
Swiftly drop the ribands gray,
Flower and vine leaf silently grow,
Strong and gracious the vase doth show,
Firm and large,— the cup of a king.
Hither and thither wandering
The potter's fingers deftly smooth
Tangled tracery, and groove
Emblems, texts, the rose of love.
Suddenly his fingers slip,
Cracks the ever-thinning lip.
Was it the potter? Was it the clay?
Allah! Allah! who can say?
And the king I was that night
Smiled, to see the potter's plight.

I am the potter, I am the clay,
Spinning fall the earth-threads gray,
Deftly molded, strong and tall
Grows the vase, and over all
Bud and roses, vine and grape,
Twine around its comely shape.
Was it potter? Was it clay?
Did the potter's hand betray
Indecision? Who can say?
At his feet the fragments roll;
Lo, beside the wheel he stands
Wondering, with idle hands.

Let him gather up his soul
And make the clay a poor man's bowl!

Thus said the quiet king I was that night,
And o'er me grew the life of morning light,
While from the constant minaret above,
As drops a feather from the angel love,
Fell the first call to prayer, and overhead
A strong voice from the prison tower said,
"Allah il Allah! God is ever great.
Time is his prophet for the souls who wait."

1890.

THE VIOLIN

Time, 1750

THE TYROL

Scene, *A hilltop with a wayside cross.*

Johan.

Sing sweet, sing sweet, my violin, sing;
Sing all thy best,— sing sweet, sing sweet;
Gay welcomes fling more swift to bring
The cadence of her loitering feet.
Ring strong along thy bounding wires
A song shall throng with youth's desires.
Let the yearning joy-notes linger
'Neath the coy, caressing finger,
Till the swift bow, flitting over,
Dainty as a doubtful lover,
Slyly, shyly, kisses dreaming,
Falters o'er the trembling strings,
And the love-tones, slower streaming,
Fade to fitful murmurings.

Another year! Ah, fate is hard!
Another year! My hands are scarred
With rugged toil. The tender skill
With which they wrought my music's will
Fails as the days go by; and yet

No term to misery is set.
Thou gentle conjurer of sound,
The one fast friend my life has found,
Vain all thy art; though I can wing
The love-larks from each leaping string,
And heavenward send them carolling;
Bend at my will the soul in prayer,
Bid man or maid my sorrow share;
Can stir the ferns upon the rock,
And anguish all the air with pain;
Or, velvet-voiced, delight to mock
The fairy footfalls of the rain.
It helps me not, though I have force
To thrill the forest with remorse,
Or torture sound till every air
Dark murder hisses, and despair;
And, 'mid the harmonies that flow,
Strange discords riot 'neath the bow,
Like 'wildered fiends astray in heaven,—
Alas, alas, why was it given,
This useless power? My wasted art
Serves but to wring a peasant's heart.

ELSA.

My Johan, have you waited long?
I heard your viol's happy song;
I heard it call, "Come quick, come fast!"
As o'er the stepping-stones I passed.
I heard it calling, "Sweet, come fleet!"
As up I came among the wheat.
The birds o'erhead called, "Soon,— come soon!"
I think they know its pretty tune.
What, sad again, and ever sad?

Play, Johan, play! 'T is eventide;
The bells ring out the story glad
How came her joy to Mary's side.

JOHAN.

I cannot. Better had I stayed
In yonder convent's tranquil shade,
At hopeless peace. They meant it well
Who bade me be a priest. The cell,
The fast, dead prayers, a palsied life,
I fought or bent to, till the strife
O'ermastered patience. None too late
I fled beyond their cursèd gate;
And free was I as birds are free
To fly, and yet at liberty,
Like them, to quench no single note
That trembles in the eager throat.
What slavery sweet to feel within
The song which not to sing is sin!
If He at whose divine decree
These hands interpret Him can be
So careless of the gift He gave,
What has He left me but the grave?
I plough, I dig; far through the years
I see myself the slave of tears,—
I, that have dreamed of love and fame,
A village boor, without a name.
Last week the young duke opened wide,
To please the poor, his garden's pride.
There, wandering, I saw withal
The nectarines rotting on the wall,
The tumbling grapes caught up with thread,
The dead-ripe figs hung overhead,

The fattening peaches swung in nets.
What woman's starving baby gets
One half the care that saves these pets?
Sharp, sharp the lesson. Break, sad heart,
Or learn to know the poor man's art,—
The art to bear with patience meek
The blow upon the other cheek.
How shall I bear it? I could steal,
Cheat, for this chance. You only feel,
And you alone, how hard the toil
That bends me o'er the silent soil,
And you alone what wild desires
Await a larger life; what fires
Of wordless anguish burn unguessed,
To think,— be sure,— that unexpressed,—
A serf, a boor,— my soul has here
A gift the waiting world holds dear.
Old violin, comrade of the hours
That labor spares, what music-flowers,
What whispers wild, what visions bright,
Thy friendship brings the tired night!
And yet, like one who, sick with sin,
Would murder love he cannot win,
Twice on the bridge, at night, I stood,
To cast thee in the wrecking flood.
But when a last farewell I sung
Too stern a pang my bosom wrung;
I could not drown the dreams that crave
Expression's life. Best were the grave.

ELSA.

Yet that were sin! Could I but give
My life to help your art to live!

The Alp-horn calls; I cannot stay.
One kiss. Ah, Johan, wait and pray.
[*She sees a purse in the road.*
A purse!

JOHAN. I pray it be not thin.

ELSA.
Nay, touch it not. It lies within
The shadow of the cross. 'T is sin.
Who taketh but a flower or stone
Where that holy shade is thrown
Is cursed to death. His dearest prayer,
Fluttering like a prisoned bird,
Never wins the happy air,
Beats against the painted saints,
At the altar hopeless faints,
Never, never to be heard.

JOHAN.
The ban is off,— the sun is on.
St. George! 't is full; my luck has won.
Good thirty ducats, gold beside!
Ho for my love, my art, my bride!

ELSA.
What, take at will another's gold,
For love, for greed? Stay, Johan,— hold!
The duke has guests! You cannot soil
Your soul with this.

JOHAN. And did they toil
To win this money? Out of earth

Some swarthy bondsman wrought its birth.
His sweat, his pain, to be at last
A wanton's wage, a gambler's cast!
Mine is it now to better end.

ELSA.

You cannot keep it. Johan, friend,
A curse is on it. Curses stay.
For gain did one Lord Christ betray:
When Satan gives another's gold,
So much of the Christ is sold.
Blessings come and heavenward go,
Wing-clipped curses bide below.
Thirty ducats, broad and bright,—
Hide them, Johan, out of sight.
Silver white, it fetcheth blight!
Gold, gold, is wicked, bold!
Hear now the story mother told:
Since ever I was a little maid
Ghost-gray silver makes me afraid.

Zillah's son, great Tubal Cain,
Deep he diggèd in the earth,
Where strong iron hath its birth,
Till the hurt earth sobbed with pain.
Little recked he, Tubal Cain.
The sword and the ploughshare
Out of iron he forged with care;
Brass and copper red he found
In their coffins underground.
Then Lord Satan hired he
To dig to all eternity.
Tore he from the broken mould

Moon-white silver, sun-red gold.
On the blessèd Sabbath morn,
Tubal Cain, with laugh and scorn,
Tortured from the silver white
Thirty pieces, broad and bright.
Quick were they and sore to keep;
None who had them gathered sleep.
Little Joseph's brethren said
They would dye his garments red;
Thirty coins of Tubal Cain
Gat they for their brother's pain.
At the holy city's gate
Joseph and Mary long did wait;
Neither corn nor gold had they
The cruel Roman tax to pay.
Little babe Jesu spake aloud,—
Marvelled greatly all the crowd,—
Spake the child in Mary's ear,
"Dig in the sand, and have no fear."
Deep they delved, and brought to light
Thirty pieces, broad and bright.
Foul-faced Judas sold his Lord
For to have this devil-hoard;
Black-faced Judas had for gain
The thirty coins of Tubal Cain.
On the floor the coins he spent,
Brake his heart, and out he went.
All the way adown the hill
Rolled the ducats with him still;
Underneath his gallows tree
Danced the ducats for to see.
Now they pay for murder done,
Now by them the thief is won.

Mary Mother, and every saint
Keep me from the silver taint!
My heart from wrong, my body from pain,
My soul from sin like Tubal Cain!

JOHAN.

The purse is mine! No old monk's tale
Shall stay my hand. If this should fail —
All men own death. How shall it be?

ELSA.

Give me the purse! The purse or me?
Am I so little worth?

JOHAN. Take care;
I hear a horse.

Enter HORSEMAN.

HORSEMAN. Ho, fellow, there!
Hast seen a purse? Just here it lay.

ELSA.

My Johan found it.

HORSEMAN (*takes it*). Thanks. Good-day.

[*Rides away as a gentleman comes behind them, hidden by the hedge.*

JOHAN.

Now is life over.

ELSA. Never less.
Your soul is saved. Now, Johan, guess
A secret. No? Well, at the fair
Last week I sold, I pledged, my hair.
To-morrow I shall fetch the gold
To win your way. Ah, love is bold.
My father? Think you I shall care?
A little hurt; less ill to bear
Than that worse hurt you bade me share.

JOHAN.
Forgive, forget! Ah, not again
Your trust shall fail.

ELSA. Just one more kiss;
And ere your sinless face I miss,
Take up the viol. Say not nay.
The twilight song. Play, Johan, play
The song that in the stillness brings
My troubled soul from earthly things,
When the blown horns the cattle call
Back to the shelter of the stall.

JOHAN. Come home, come home.
Not through the sallow wheat,
Come home, come home,
Though to grass-tangled feet
The dewy ways be sweet.
Come home, come home.
Meek eyes and skins of silk,
Come home, come home.
Fetch the clover-scented milk,
Come home, come home.

With their pails the maidens wait,
Ever singing at the gate,
Come home, come home.
Come ye home to Mary's wings,
Joy to earth the angel rings,
Come home, come home.
Bring your load of care and sin,
Lo, she waits to let you in,
Come home, come home.

Stay, stay awhile. Though dear my art,
More dear your love. The tears that start
I know are joy. Lo, Seraph wings
Flutter o'er the praying strings.
Hark and hear your gladdened soul
All the raptured viol thrill;
Viewless hands my touch control,
Other force than earthly will.
Purer than the chant of saints
Rings the anthem of your heart;
Though upon your lip it faints,
Though the tears your eyelids part,
Angel voices, pure and strong,
Catch the sweetness of the song.
Hark! the silver crash of cymbals;
Hear the joyous clash of timbrels,
Pouring through the shadows dim;
All the air is music-riven,
And the organ's stately hymn
Thunders to the vault of heaven.
Murmurs, whispers, sad, mysterious,
Language of another sphere,

Faint and solemn, tender, serious,
Wander to my listening ear.

Enter GENTLEMAN.

GENTLEMAN.
A poet-lover! Did you find my purse?

JOHAN.
Ay; and had kept it, too,— or worse,—
Except for her.

GENTLEMAN. Would Eve had stayed
As honest as your blushing maid!
I always thought the story queer,
Would like that poor snake's tale to hear.
Sometimes I fancy Madam Eve
Tempted the Tempter to deceive.
I heard you tell a pretty tale
About some yellow hair for sale.
Wilt sell it now? Say, gold for gold!
Let 's see the goods. [*Pulls out the comb.*
'T is worth, when sold,
A hundred ducats.

JOHAN. No, my lord,
'T is not for sale. No miser's hoard
Could buy it.

GENTLEMAN. Say two hundred, then;
A kiss to boot. I know of men
Would ask for six.

ELSA. 'T is yours,—'t was mine!

GENTLEMAN.

The gold is thine. Too proudly shine
Those locks above a heart of gold
For me to part them. When you 're old,
And you have babes and he has fame,
Teach in their prayers the wild duke's name.
And you who thought a purse to keep,
Within that battered violin sleep —
Ah, but I heard — all wealth and power
Man craves on earth. In some full hour,
When heaven is nearest, make for me
One golden fugue, to live and be
Remembered when the morrow's light
Is gone for us. Good-night, Good-night.

1887.

FRANÇOIS VILLON

THE COUNT DE LILLE, AND
THE SEIGNEUR DE LUCE, A FREE-LANCE.

TIME, *circa* 1463

SCENE, *The Garden of an Inn.*

DE LUCE.

Our good Duke Charles, you tell me, fain would know
Where bides this other rhymer. Be it so.
I might have said, I know not: for to lie
Is easy, natural, and hath brevity
To win its hearing favor, whilst the truth
Spins out forever like a woman's youth,
And lacks the world for ally. But mere pride
Would make me honest. Let the duke decide
'Twixt boor and noble. Ah! 't was gay, I think,
When we were lads together. What! not drink?
Then, by St. Bacchus, here 's to you, my lord!
Men say that luck, a liberal jade, has poured
Her favors on you: lordships half a score,
Castles and lands, that vineyard on the Loire;
Something too much for one who lightly leaves
Such wine as this. Alas! who has, receives.

De Lille.

Come when you will and share it. I have served
God and the King. What fortune I 've deserved
The good saints know; through many a year I 've played
The games of war and peace. My father's blade
Has no stain on it. That, it seemeth me,
Were pleasant to the conscience, when, set free
From war and council and grown old and gray,
Fades in monastic peace one's life away.
These war-filled years gone by since last we met
Have had their griefs. What of yourself? Forget
My fates and me. I think the latter wars
Have missed your helping. As for me, my scars
Count half these years.

De Luce. Well, as chance willed, I fought
In Spain, or Italy, or France, and brought
Some pretty plunder back; have killed my share,
Dutch, Don, or Switzer, any — everywhere
That bones were to be broken and the fare
And game were good; have taken soldier pay
On this side and on that. In wine or play
Spent gaily; found life but a merry friend
That lent, and then forgot the debt. To end,
Came home. And now my tale. On Easter-day
It lost its hero.

Silence, once 't is broke,
Can no man mend. 'T was thus this fellow spoke
Of whom I talk. I never owned the thing
Folks like to label conscience, which the king
Packs wisely on his chancellor. My device,
"*Suivez le Roi,*" suits well with life. Not nice

Need one to be who Louis, or the rest,
Loyally follows,— taking what is best
Each good day offers; yet, sometimes, De Lille,
Woman or wine, or one's too ready steel,
Lures one a trifle past the line of sport,
And then,— you see my point,— a friend at court
Perchance is needed. Gossip, hereabout,
Which spreads like oil on water, leaves no doubt
That I should speak. That wastrel had a way,
A trick of speech, as when he said, one day,
"The pot of Silence cracked, 't were best to break."
Strange how his words stay with me! Half awake
Last night, I saw him, laughing too, and gay,
A grinning ghost, De Lille. What priest could lay
A rhyming, jesting fiend? I have killed men,
Ay, and some pretty fellows too, but then
None troubled sleep. This dead man, like an owl,
Roosts, wide-eyed, on my breast,— a feeble fowl —
Mere barnyard fowl at morn,— a carrion ghost.
The devil has bad locks to keep his host
Of poets, thieves, and tipplers.

De Lille. Think you so?
No man can tell, De Luce, when some chance blow
Shall give him memories none may care to know.
Once, when we charged nigh Burgos, sorely pressed,
I drove my rapier through a youngster's breast
In wild fierce mellay when none think,— and yet
I see him,— see him reeling; never can forget
His large eyes' sudden change, that one long cry!
'T was but a moment, and the charge went by.
Some unknown woman curses me in sleep,
Mother or mistress; why does memory keep

These nettles, let the roses fall? Well! well!
What more, De Luce? The tale you have to tell
Is told a friend!

De Luce. Three bitter years ago
A woman, every year more fair, one Isabeau,
A Demoiselle De Meilleraye, began
To twist this coil which later cost a man
A pleasant reckless life, and you my tale.
Maids I have loved a many, widows frail
Loved *par amour,* but this one gaily spun
A pretty net about me. It was done
Before I fully knew, and once begun,
No fly more surely netted. Ever still
The web is on me. At her merry will
What pranks she played! — and I, a fettered slave,
Was black or white, was all things, blithe or grave,
As met her humor. Many a suitor came
Because her lands were broad, and, too, the game
Worth any candle. She but laughed. Some flared,
Or sputtered, and went out. My lady shared
Their woe but little. As for me, I fought
A good half dozen lordlings, also caught
A hurt or two. But then, ah! that was worse,
A fellow came who wooed my dame in verse,
And did it neatly,— made her triolets
Rhyming her great blue eyes to violets;
Wrote chansons, villanelles, and rondelettes,
Sonnets and other stuff, and chansonnettes,
And jesting, rhymed the color of my nose
With something,— possibly an o'erblown rose.
No need to say we fought, but luck went hard:
I thrust in tierce; he parried, broke my guard,

And then, I slipped,— St. Denis; but I lay
A good six weeks to ponder on the way
The rascal did the thing. And he the while
Had to himself my lady's gracious smile;
Whereon we played the game again, and time
Was that to which my rhymer ceased to rhyme.
A pretty trick there is, De Lille, you see
I learned in Padua; this way, on one knee
To drop a sudden; then a thrust in quarte
Settles the business. You shall learn the art.
'T is very simple. Ah! before he died
He fumbled at his neck, and vainly tried
To snatch at something, till at last I took
A locket from him, for his own hand shook,
As well might be. He had but only breath
To mutter feebly "Isabeau", then death
Had him, and I the locket — have it still,
And some day she shall have it — in my will,
For scourge of memory. This same Isabeau
Wept as a woman does, whilst to and fro
I wandered, waiting till the mood should go,
Then came again and found my lady fair
Reading my dead man's chansons. Little care
Had she for others. I, a love-fool, spent
The summer days like any boy, intent
To fit my will to hers. I laugh again
To think I vexed my battle-wildered brain
In search of rhymes.— You smile, my lord? 'T is so,
To find me gallant rhymes to Isabeau.
Pardie, De Lille, she rhymed it thrice to — No!
Swore none could love who lacked the joyous art
To love in song.

Now, really, when the heart
Gives out, and knows no more, one asks the head
To help that idiot ass. Some one has said,—
Ah! that man said it,— said, "'T is heads that win
In love's chuck-penny game." And I had been
The heart's fool quite too long.—
At last, one day,
Hunting by St. Rileaux, I lost my way,
And wandering, lit upon a man who lay
Drowsing, or drunk, or dreaming mid the fern.
Quite motionless he stayed, as in I turn,
And say, "Get up there, villein! Ho! in there,—
Get up, and pilot me the way to Claire!"
On this rose lazily a lean, long man;
Yawned, stretched himself,— with eyes as brown as tan,
And somewhat insolent, regarded me; a nose
Fine as my lady's; red, too, I suppose,
With sun, or just so much of sun as glows
Shut up in wine: and thus far not a word.
Till I, not over gay, or somewhat stirred
By this brute's careless fashions, wrathful said,
"Art dumb, thou dog?" But he untroubled laid
His elbow 'gainst a tree-trunk, set his hand
To prop his head, and then,—
"I understand.
You lost the way to Claire, whilst I have lost
The gladdest thought that haply ever crossed
A poet's brain. Think what it is, fair sir,
To feel within your soul a gentle stir,
To see a vision forming as from mist,
And just then as your lips have almost kissed
This thing of heaven, to have a man insist

You show the way to Claire. A man may die
And still the world go on, but songs that fly
From laughing lip to lip, and make folk glad,
Have more than mortal life. 'T is passing sad.
You 've killed a thing had outlived you and me,
Bishops and kings, and danced, a voice of glee,
On lovers' tongues." Loudly I laughed and long.
"Mad! mad!" I cried; "the whole world 's mad in song.
Out-memory kings? What noble trade have you
That rate a king so lo? Speak out, or rue
The hour we met. Your name, your name, man, too,
Unless you like sore bones." At this he stayed,
No more disturbed than I, and undismayed
Said, "François Villon de Montcorbier
Men call me; but I really cannot say
I have not other names to suit at need,
As certain great folks have; and sir, indeed
As to my trade, I am a spinner, and I spin,
As please my moods, gay songs of love or sin,
Sonnets or psalms — could make a verse on you.
Hast ever heard my 'Ballade des Pendus'?
I gave the verse a certain swing, you see,
That humors well the subject; you 'll agree,
To read it really shakes one; many a thief
That verse has set a-praying. To be brief —
Ah, you 'll not hear it?— then, sir, by my sword,—
But that 's in pawn,— or better, by my word,—
I can't pawn that,— ye saints! if I but could!
Now just to pay your patience,— leave the wood
At yonder turning; then the road to Claire
Lies to the left; but you must be aware
The day is somewhat warm, and pray you try

To think how very, how unnatural dry
I am inside of me; for outwardly,
Thanks to the dews, I 'm damp; but could I put
My outside inside,— Ah! your little 'but'
Is really quite a philosophic thing
For lords who lose their way, and men who sing.
The simple fact is, I am deadly dry —
And that mere text once out, the sole reply,
The sermon, lies within your purse." I said,
"Had you not put a notion in my head,
I long ago had broken yours. Instead,
Sell me its use awhile." "If talk be dull,"
Cried he, "'twixt one who fasts and one who 's full,
St. George! 't is duller than the dullest worst
When one of them is just corpse-dry with thirst.
Once, by great Noah! a certain bishop-beast
Kept me for three long summer months at least
On bread and water,— water! Were wine rain,
I never, never could catch up again."
Well, to be brief, De Lille, just there and then
We drove an honest bargain. He, his pen
Sold for so long as need was,— I, to get
Three times a week some joyful rondelette,
Sirventes satiric, competent to fit
The case of any wooing, versing wit,
Dizains, rondeaux, and haply pastourelles,
With any other rhyming devil-spells
A well-soaked brain might hatch, whilst I agreed
To house, clothe, wine the man, and feed.
That day we settled it at Claire. A tun
Of Burgundy it took before 't was done.
And then, to ease him at his task, you know,
Smiling he queried of this Isabeau:

Her eyes, her lips, her hair; because, forsooth,
"The trap of lies were baited best with truth."
Quoth I, half vexed, "Brown-red, her hair." "I know,"
My poet says; "gold — darkened, like the glow
The sunset casts, to crown a brow of snow."
Then I, a love-sick fool!—"She has a way —
Of"—"Yes, I understand; as lilies sway
When south winds flatter, and the month is May,
And love words has the maiden rose to say."
Here pausing, suddenly he let his head
Rest on his hands, and, half in whisper, said,
"Alack! Full many a year the daisies grow
Where rests at peace another Isabeau."
"The devil take thy memories! Guard thy tongue!"
Said I. What chanced was droll, for quick tears, wrung
From some low love-past, tumbled in his wine:
Cried he, "The saints weep through us. Can these tears be mine?
The dead are kings and rule us"— drank the liquor up,
Laughed outright like a girl, and turned the cup,
With "Never yet before, since life was young,
Did I put water in my wine," then flung
The glass behind him, shouted, "Quick, a bottle! —
Another; grief is but a thief to throttle.
Ho! let the ancient hangman Time appear
And tuck it a neat tie beneath the ear.
Many a trade has master Time.
He sits in corners, and spinneth rhyme.
He is a partner of master Death,

Puffs man's candle out with a breath,
Leaves the wick to sputter and tell
In a sort of odorous epitaph
How foul the thought of a man may smell
For the world that lives, and has its laugh.
Ha! but Time has many trades!
Something in me now persuades
Master Time, grown debonair,
Hath turned for me a potter rare,
And made him a vase beyond compare:
Here below, a rounded waist,
Fit with roses to be laced;
Rising, ripely curved above
Into flowing lines of love.
Thinking, too, how sweet 't would grow,
Time called the proud vase Isabeau."
" By every saint of rhyme," laughed I, " good fellow,
If this a man can do when rather mellow "—
" What shall he do ripe-drunk? " he cried; " erelong
The vine shall live again a flower of song."
How much he drank that six months who may know?
He kept his word. There came a noble flow,—
Rondels and sonnets, songs, gay fabliaux,
Tencils, and virelais, and chants royaux,
That turned at last the head of Isabeau.
For, by and by, he spun a languid lay
Set her a weeping for an April day.
And then a reverdie, I scarcely knew
Just what it meant; by times the damsel grew
Pensive and tender, till at last she said,—
You see the bait was very nicely spread,—
" How chances it, fair sir, this gift of song

Lay thus unused? You did yourself a wrong:
But now I love you,— love as one well may
A heart that hides its treasures, yet can say
At last their sweetness out. This simple lay!—
How could you know my thoughts?"
On this in haste
I cast an arm around her little waist,
And kissed her lips, and murmured tenderly
Some pretty lines my poet made for me
And this occasion's chance.
So there, the dame
Well wooed and married, ends this pleasant game.

De Lille.
I knew your poet once,— of knaves the chief,
A gallows-mocking brawler, guzzler, thief,—
This orphan of the devil won with song
Our good Duke Charles, who thinks of no man wrong,
And least of all a poet. Once or twice
Duke Charles has saved his neck. One can't be nice
With poet friends, nor leave them in the lurch
Because they stab a man, or rob a church.
Also, that hog-priest-doctor, Rabelais, you know,
Kept him a while, then bade the vagrant go
For half a nightingale and half a crow.
So there he slips from sight. Then comes a tale
That stirs our rhyming Duke. I must not fail
To know the sequel.

De Luce. Months went by. My man
I had no need for; soon my dame began

To droop and wilt, and, too, I knew not why,
To watch me sidewise with attentive eye,
Or stay for silent hours cloaked with thought,
Laughing or weeping readily at naught.
What changes women? A wife is just a wife.
The thing tormented me, for now her life
Faced from me ever, and, her head bent low,
She lived with some worn sonnet or rondeau
Had served its purpose. Vexed at last, I took
The wretched stuff, the whole of it, and shook
The fragments to the winds. Now, by St. George!
The thing stuck ever bitter in my gorge,
That such a peasant-slave's mere words should be
The one strong bond that held this love to me,
That was my life, and is. Alas! in vain
I played the lover over, till in pain
Because she pined, poor fool, I sought again
My butt of verse and wine, and gaily said,
"Here, fellow, there 's for drink! Set me your head
To verse me something honest, that shall speak
A strong man's love, and to my lady's cheek
Fetch back its rose again." But as for him,
This hound, he studied me with red eyes, dim
And dulled with wine, and lightly laughing cried,
"Not I, my lord. Not ever, if I tried
The longest day of June. Your falcon caught,
Be sure no jesses by another wrought
Will hold a captive;" and with rambling talk
Put me aside, sang, hummed, took up the chalk
The landlord wont to score his drinks withal,
A moment paused, and scribbled on the wall,

"If God love to a sexton gave,
Surely he would dig it a grave;

If God fitted an ass with wings,
What would he do with the pretty things?"
I cursed him for a useless sot, but he,
Leering and heedless, scrawled unsteadily
Just "Wallow, wallow, wallow; this from me
To all wise pigs that on this mad earth be;"
Wrote "François Villon" underneath, and there,
Smitten with drink, dropped on the nearest chair
And slept as sleep the dead. I in despair
Went on my way.

But she, my gentle dame,
Grew slowly feebler, like an oilless flame,
Until this cursed thing happened. On a day
I chanced upon her singing, joyous, gay;
Glad leapt my hopes. I kissed her, saw her start,
Grow sudden pale, a quick hand on her heart.—
'Fore God, I love her dearly, but I tore
A paper from her bosom, yet forbore
One darkened moment's time to read it, then
Saw the wild love verse, knew what drunken pen
Had dared.—

Fierce-eyed she stayed a little space,
Then struck me red with words, as if my face
A man had struck, said, "What can be more base
Than bribe a peasant soul to win with thought
Above your thinking what you vainly sought?
I love you? No — I loved the man who knew
To tell the gladness of his love through you;
A thief, no doubt; and pray what was he who
Thus stole my love? You lied! and he, a sot!
A sot, you say, could rise above his pot,—
You, never! Love me! Could one like you know
In love's sweet climate truth and honor grow?"

But I, seeing my folly clear, said, "Isabeau,
What matters it if I but used the flow
Of this man's fantasies to word the praise
I would have said a hundred eager ways
And moved you never? Is it rare one pays
A man to sing?"
"Henceforth, my lord," said she,
"We talk tongues strange to each, but ever he
Talked that my heart knows best. Your wife am I,
That's past earth's mending; what is left but try
To weary on to death? What else?" I turned,
Cried, "But I loved you well! This boor has
earned
A traitor's fate."
"And you," she moaned; nor more,
Save, "Let *all* traitors die," and on the floor
Fell in a heap.
Thenceforward half distraught
I sought my poet-thief, but never caught
The cunning fiend, till as it chanced one night,
My horse fallen lame, I, walking, saw the light
Still in her window. There below it stood
A man where fell the moonlight all aflood,
And suddenly a hand of mastery swept
The zittern, and — a whining love-song leapt.
Ah! but too well knew I the song he sang;
I smiled to think it was his last. It rang
Mad chimes within my head. "Now then," I cried,
"A dog-life for a love-life!" Quick aside
My poet cast his zittern, drew his sword,
Tried as he stood his footing on the sward,
And laughed. He ever laughed, and laughing said,
"Before we two cut throats, and one is dead,

And talk gets quite one-sided, let me speak,
Perchance it may be this rat's final squeak;
Even a cat grants that, my lord, you know.
Speak certain words I must of this dame Isabeau.
And if you will not, this have I to say,
These legs of mine have ofttimes won the day,
And may again if I have not my way.
My thanks. You 're very good, and now,— what if
Full twenty dozen times a week a whiff
Of some sweet rose is given just to smell,
The rose unseen,— you catch my meaning?— Well,
One haply gets rose-hungry, and erelong
Desires the rose. You think I did you wrong
Who bade you see her as one sees in song,
Her neck, her face, the sun-gloss of her hair,
Eyes such as poets dream, the love-curves fair;
These have you seen; but as for me, they were,
Unseen of sense, more lovely.
Mark, my lord,
How sweet to-night the lilies. Pray afford
A moment yet to my life out of yours. Believe
A thing so strange you may not, nor conceive:
This woman, on the beauty of whose face
I never looked, nor shall,— whose virgin grace
I sold to you,— is mine while time endures.
Yea, for your malady earth has no cures;
A brute, a thief am I that caged this love.
A sodden poet! Some one from above
Looks on us both to-night; you nobly born,
I in the sties of life. I do repent
In that I wronged this lady innocent.
But if you live or I, where'er she bide,
One François Villon walketh at her side.

Kiss her! Your kiss? It will be I who kiss.
Yea, every dream of love your life shall miss
I shall be dreaming ever!
Well, the cat,
Patient or not, has waited. As for that,
Be comforted. Hell never lacks reward
For them that serve it. Thanks.— On guard. On guard."
No word said I. Long had I listened, dazed.
Now scorn broke out in hatred; crazed,
Fiercely I lunged. He, laughing, scarce so rash,
Parried and touched my arm. The rapier clash
Went wild a minute; then a woman's cry
Broke from the hedge behind him, and near by
Some moonlit whiteness gleamed. He turned, and I,
By heaven! 't was none too soon, I drove my sword
Clean through the peasant dog from point to guard,
And held her as I watched him. Better men
A many have I killed, but this man!— Then
He staggered, reeling, clutched at empty air
And at his breast, and pitching here and there,
Fell, shuddered, and was dead.
By Mary's grace,
The woman kneeling kissed the dead dog's face!

Take you the Duke my tale. The woman lives.
The man is dead. None knows but she. What gives
Such needless haste to go? 'T is not yet late.
Think you the story of this peasant's fate
Will vex Duke Charles? How looks the thing to you?
No comment? None?

De Lille. None I could well afford
To speak. The Duke must judge, not I.

De Luce. My lord,
Your fashions like me not, and plainly, mine
Are somewhat franker.

De Lille. I must ride. The wine?

De Luce.
I pay for that. The man who drinks must pay.
"The wine of friendship lasteth but a day,"
So said that pot-house Solomon. I suppose
'T is easily thinned with time. As this world goes,
A sorry vintage.

1890.

THE MISER

A MASQUE

TIME: *The Fifteenth Century. Midnight.*

Iron boxes. A table strewn with jewels, trinkets, and coin. An hour-glass. An old man walks to and fro. (A knock is heard.)

MISER.

Come in. [*Covers the jewels with a cloth.*

Enter a Woman, *who unmasks.*

What wouldst thou, wench? Hast aught to sell?

WOMAN.

I've that to sell for which men give their souls.

MISER.

Alack! their souls. Go seek yon market-place,
And learn what usury a soul will fetch.
The body of a man may sweat you gold,
Plow, sow, and reap, yet at the end be apt
As other carrion to fatten grapes.
How came you in? They keep slack guard below.

WOMAN.

Good looks, like gold, pass anywhere on earth —
[*Sings*

A man and a maid
The warder prayed.
Here is gold, said he,
But a look gave she;
Sweet eyes went in,
And the man was stayed.
For this is the way
The world to win,
The world to win.
Honey of kisses,
Honey of sin,—
This is the way
The world to win.

MISER.

Ay. The fool's world, not mine. The hour-glass wastes.

WOMAN.

Forget to turn it, and the hour is thine.
That minds me what the priest said Easter-eve:
The devil owns the minutes, God the years.
What think you that he meant?

MISER. Nay, ask of him.
Age hath its secrets. Time shall sow for thee
Betwixt thy grand-dame wrinkles answers meet.
Thy errand, girl!

WOMAN. Look in my face, and learn.

MISER.

By Venus! I have read that scroll too oft.
Eyes that say, Yes! and lips that murmur, No!
The red cheeks' mock-surrender. All the cheats
That make to-morrow lie to yesterday.

WOMAN.

Like a philosopher lies yesterday,
To-morrow like a poet; but to-day
Is true until to-morrow makes it lie.
What if the minute's coin that buys thee joy
Ring false the morrow morn! How old you look!
Kiss me, and live. A ducat for a kiss!
A ducat each for these two eyes of mine!

MISER.

A ducat! By St. Mercury! not I,—
A thing unchanging for a thing that dies.
I 've been the fool of women, wit, and wine;
Have argued much with doctors; had my fill,
Ay that was best, of battle's stormy fate;
Have fooled and have been fooled, been loved and
loved.

WOMAN.

Were any like to me?

MISER. The lips I love
Betray me not at each new gallant's suit.
What are thy charms to these?
[*Walks across the room, and returns with a casket of gold coins, while the Woman hastily looks under the table-cover and replaces it.*
See, this and this!

[*Shows her gold medals.*

Hast thou the eyes of Egypt's haughty queen?
These eager lips that kissed a world away?
Lo, here Zenobia,— wisdom, beauty, grace.
Match me this warrior maid — this huntress lithe
Set in the changeless chastity of gold.

WOMAN.

Their lips are cold. A ducat for a kiss!

MISER.

Nay, get thee gone. Here 's something sweeter far
Than wanton vouches of a woman's lips.

WOMAN.

I would not kiss thee for a world of ducats.

[*Exit Woman, who whispers, as she goes, to a gentleman who enters, clad in a red cloak, hat, and cock's feather.*

MISER.

Who let thee in?

GENTLEMAN. A girl, fair sir,— a girl.
Quite often 't is a girl that lets me in!

MISER.

Who art thou?

GENTLEMAN. Many people. Part of all,
For well-bred gentlemen "my Lord Duke Satan," thus
Here somewhat late to thank you. Truly, sir,
To sum the seed of sin you 've sown for me
Would puzzle the arithmetic of — Well,

One speaks not lightly of his home. My thanks.
Give me your hand, good friend.

MISER. Art drunk! Begone!

GENTLEMAN.
Alas! How sad, not know me. Gratitude
Is rare in either world. Yet men, I note,
Know not themselves, and therefore know not me.

MISER.
The jest is good.

GENTLEMAN. What, I — I, Satan, jest!
How hard to satisfy! Unhelped by me,
What hadst thou been? Lo, under this frail cloth
[*Touches the table-cover.*
There lie the pledges of a hundred souls:
That zone of pearls! That ruby coronal!

MISER.
Thou liest, fool!

GENTLEMAN. The ring,— the sapphire ring.

MISER.
The thing is strange.

GENTLEMAN. Nay, gentle partner, nay.
Behold, I come to thee in sore distress,
A bankrupt devil. Why? It matters not.
Perhaps I gambled for the morning star,
Gambled with Lucifer; in want, perchance,

For reason good, of some less sin-worn world.
Brothers are we. No need for us to pray
Deliverance from temptation — to do good.
Not equals quite. A trifle thou dost lack
Thy master 's joy in evil for itself.
Only the crack-brained sin for love of sin,
And crime is wretchedly alloyed with good.
Ho! for one honest sinner!

MISER. Out, foul fiend!

GENTLEMAN.
To waste your hours were but to squander mine.
Ha! Shall I take my own?
[*Pulls off the table-cover.*

MISER. Without there! Help!
Help — help — a thief!

GENTLEMAN. Nay. Let me choose my coins,
Let me confess them. They have tales to tell.
I am a devil-poet, and can see
Beneath the skin of things.
[*Takes coins in turn.*] On this is writ
A maiden's honor gone. And here is one
Helped the black barter of a traitor's soul.
This 'gainst a priestly conscience turned the scale.
And this is red with murder. See, gray hairs
Stick to it yet. Alas for charity!
Not one,— not one. The devil has no friend
[*A knock is heard.*
Save him that enters.
[*Opens the door to the cowled figure, DEATH.*

Pray thee, sir, come in.
Lo, my best friend! the scavenger of time,
Who picks from off this dust-heap called a world
The scared and hurried ants that come and go
Without a whence or whither worth a thought.
Be easy with this partner of my cares.
This greedy dotard drunk with guzzling gold
Spare me a little. Take thou hence the good,
The fair, the young, the chaste, the innocent.

[*To the* MISER.

Good-night, my friend. I leave you one who owns
The only truth this stupid planet holds.

[*Exit Gentleman.*

MISER.

What feast of folly hath broke loose to-night?
Who art thou?

DEATH. Death!

MISER. The devil and then Death!
Thou hast the play the wrong end first, my friend.

[*Laughs.*

DEATH.

Then laugh again. Full many a year has fled
Since sound of laughter crackled in mine ears.
There are who face me smiling. Men like thee,
Who gather ducats as I reap the years,
To add them to the gathered hoard of time;
Yea, men like thee, who poison souls for gain,
And love life for its baseness, mock not me.
Only the noble and the wretched smile
When these lean fingers summon to the grave.
Thy day is near; even now the clogging blood

Chills stagnant at my touch, and soon for thee
Shall come the yellow hags to stretch thy limbs,
And put the coins upon thy staring eyes.
[MISER *falls into a chair.*

MISER.
What cruel jest is this? I pray thee go.
My heart beats riotous, my legs grow weak.

DEATH.
Give me a hundred ducats.

MISER. I! Not one.

DEATH.
A hundred ducats for a year of greed.

MISER.
Not one, I say.

DEATH. Then, to that nether world.
Two days I grant thee, till upon the stair
Thy coffined weight shall creak, and other hands
Shall count thy ducats.

MISER. Take thou ten, and go.

DEATH.
Ten ducats for a journey round the world!

MISER.
Nay, nay, not one. Thou surely art not Death.

DEATH.
Already on thy sallow cheek I see
The set grim smile which hardens on the face

When death unriddles life; thy jaw hangs slack;
The sweat wherewith man labors unto death
Drops from thy brow.

MISER. Take what thou wilt, and go.
Hast said a hundred ducats. Take but that.
Take them and leave me. Not a ducat more.
[*Death takes a bag.*

DEATH.
For this I give thee many a lingering year.
Without there, gentlemen! Come in, come in!
[*Enter* PRINCE *masked, the Court Fool as Mephistopheles, women and courtiers in fancy dress. The* MISER *leaps up.*

MISER.
What robber-band is this?

PRINCE. A jest, my friend.

GENTLEMAN.
The Prince has lost his wager. Death has won.

DEATH.
To supper, gentlemen. Here's that shall pay.

MISER.
My gold! Alas, my gold!

DEATH. But yet you live.
[*Exeunt* maskers *singing.*

1884.

THE WAGER

TIME, 1650. *Twilight*

The Duke's garden near Tours.

CLAIRE DE CHASTEL BLANC, a lady of the Duchess.
RENÉ LA TOUR.
THE VICOMTE DE LANCIVAL.

LA TOUR *walks moodily to and fro.*

LA TOUR. Five years ago in this same garden space
I fled the mockery of a smiling face.
Upon my soul, I was a love-sick lad;
A baser man perchance had won; I had
The self-accusing modesty of love,
That by its proud humility doth prove
How honest is its nature. Since that day
Our feet have trod, alas! a diverse way —
Mine as the devil guided, hers to find
A man to match the lightness of her mind.
So runs the world; and always, I suppose,
The thorns outlast for many a year the rose.
What is there memory may care to keep
Of her life or of mine? I basely heap

Dull days on sorrier yesterdays: what more
Is left to me? And yet — and yet before
I loved this woman and she bade me go
For but a love-struck boy, I used to know
Far other dreams than such as madly keep
The wild days reeling through the hours of sleep.

[*Pauses.*

So, here it was I sang my pretty way
To steal in sleep a heart was cold by day.
How long ago it seems! I used to sing
Not very ill. Ah me! How ran the thing?

[*He sings as he walks.*

Sleep on! Sleep on! Thou canst not fly;
Thou art the gentle thrall of sleep.
Thy captured dreams in vain may try
The daylight's cold reserve to keep.

Sleep on! Those watchful eyes that be
Thy maiden sentinels by day
No more shall keep their guard for thee,
Sweet foes that warned my love away.

And I will kiss thee with a song—

A modest way to kiss! I have it wrong;
And all the rest, like love, has taken wings
And gone the deuce knows whither. If some things
Were like a song, as readily forgot,
Man's fate on earth might prove a happier lot.

[*A servant enters with a letter.* La Tour *takes it and stands in thought, smiling. He opens it in an absent way, not yet reading it.*

Here is the woman's name I was to learn
This morning. Well, I trust the lips that earn
My needed ducats are not old. By heaven!
That were an insult scarce to be forgiven,
A jest to cost some drunken reveller dear.

[*Glances at the letter.*

"Claire! — Claire de Chastel Blanc." I did not hear
That name among the many tossed about
On ribald lips last night. Perhaps a doubt,
Or the Duke's presence, or a friend who knew
To check some reckless sot, held back the crew,
Till at the gray of dawn I homeward went,
And left them babbling, on a choice intent.

[*He walks to and fro, in thought, and then slowly tears up the letter, retaining the fragments.*

Now, I 'll not do it! This mad bet of mine,
The bastard child of folly and of wine,
Has somehow lost to-day its vinous zest,
And, in the sober light of morn confessed,
Stirs certain memories. Now, there 's my lord —
Her lord — will fume and talk about his sword,
And then is just as like as not, I think,
To pouch the insult and forget in drink.
What of the woman? Wherefore should I spare
The lips that spared not me? Why should I care?

[*Pauses.*

I will not do it.

[*As he speaks he casts away the torn paper and wanders aimlessly to and fro in the Duke's garden. Of a sudden he sees Claire seated and busy with the roses lying in her lap.*

(*Aside.*) By St. Opportune,
Who doth for mischief match the naughty moon!

What devil set this trap for me who meant
To swear the wager lost, and well content
To pay and end it, duly penitent
And out of pocket? What would she have lost?
The fool who is her lover scarce will miss
One kiss subtracted from his sum of bliss.
Now, good St. Anthony, who ought to be
The friend of men sore tempted, pray for me; —
You were not tempted, for you knew not love.

[*Coming up behind* CLAIRE, *he bends over and kisses her. She starts to her feet.*

CLAIRE. Now, by dear Marie and all saints above,
You — René — kissed me!

LA TOUR. Yes, and, on my soul,
I 'm glad and sorry: that sums up the whole,
The sin and penance; larger joy and pain
Than ever I shall know in life again. [*She is silent.*
For God's sake, speak to me; say something, Claire.

CLAIRE. Your shame lacks courage, sir; how could you dare?

LA TOUR. Fate, fortune, luck, have never known to spare
Head, heart, or purse of mine. 'T is very rare
My follies pay as well. How could I dare?
The question 's childlike, madam. What! in tears!
These were not counted in my list of fears.

CLAIRE. An idle gossip warned me yestereve
Of this, and you; yet how could I believe
Of one who once — no matter. What I said
Did cost one shameless cheek its share of red.
He little liked my comment; nor would you
Who tossed about amid a gambling crew

What estimate to put upon a kiss,
And set its worth at haply that or this.
He, laughing, swore the chivalry of wine
Did make you set a double price on mine.
You gaily urged, they say, that stolen fruit
Is ever sweeter. May I ask, to suit
The pretty poetry of tavern hours,
If that be also true of stolen flowers?
What need to talk? You have the prize you sought,
A courteous wager!

LA TOUR. Madame, he who brought
This garnished story lied.

CLAIRE. It matters naught;
A man shall question you.

LA TOUR. That were but just;
In point of fact, I really think he must;
And 'twixt a tongue-stab and a rapier-thrust
I gladly choose the latter; but why both
To punish one who never yet was loath
To face a man? Before a mistress' tongue
I cry for pity as I did when young.
Down goes my flag; I counted not the cost,
Else had this silly bet been gladly lost.

CLAIRE. Jest if it please you. Better men have died
For lighter cause than this.

LA TOUR. So, I am tried,
Condemned past hope. Ah, Claire, thou ever art
The same cold woman. Could I call my heart
To witness for me —

CLAIRE. 'T is a feebler jest.

LA TOUR. Perhaps! perhaps! But let me be confessed.

Give one decree to die his little hour.
The gay temptation of a minute's power
Set in my way the honey of a flower;
And, by your leave, we 'll say it was a rose
The bee-god Cupid robbed; and, I suppose,
A dainty diet, to be held more sweet
Than common clover honey.

CLAIRE. You may treat
This insult lightly —

LA TOUR. Madam, I believe
Men have kissed women since the days of Eve;
'T is very frequent. Such fair goods, you know,
Are bartered, stolen, sold or high or low;
The market varies. One may cost a life,
A curse, a kingdom, win or lose a wife.

[LA TOUR *pauses, while* CLAIRE *stands in silence.*
Have you no answer, madam? I have tried
Love, logic, penitence, have not denied
The muse her pretty privilege to defend
This naughty brigand here without a friend.
Now, what 's a kiss that naught can it atone?

CLAIRE. The trembling scales of loyal love alone
May know to weigh this coin of nature's own.
You cast the shadow of a nameless fear,
You left the memory of an angry tear.
Go! I could wish that you were lying dead,
Ay, here, to-night, ere this had need been said.

LA TOUR. Am I so surely hated?

CLAIRE. Call it hate,
Contempt — a woman's sorrow.

[*She moves away.*

LA TOUR. Pray you wait.

What if I swear this wager, wildly made,
Was lost? Wilt say —?

CLAIRE. That you were more afraid
Than fits a man.

LA TOUR. Yes, that may well be said.
'T is you I fear.

CLAIRE. Me! There was once an hour,
Oh, very long ago, should still have power
To hurt you now. What is there more to say?

LA TOUR. Yes, there are ghosts no priest has power to lay;
One is to-morrow, one is yesterday;
Both have your words called up to-night for me.
But ghosts like these at least do set one free
From such poor scare-souls as an honest blade.
That lays all spectres! Madam, undismayed
I bow before my judge and glad accept
The fate this wretched hour for me has kept.
And for De Lancival, I promise he
Shall in the quickest blade of Picardy
Find naught to hinder what your lips decree.
Say,— when you think upon this hour and me,—
"He loved me once." Be that slight epitaph
Deep graven where the miserable half
Of life's most worthless memories serves to keep
Some fading thought of such as, thankful, sleep,
And wake no more on earth.

CLAIRE. You loved me?

LA TOUR. Ay.

CLAIRE. How can it be? If once you loved me, why,
Why did your folly choose of all who live,
Of all fair women, me alone to give

This tavern feast a flavor? Pray you go.
The modest gentleman I seemed to know
In memory, kindly, tender, brave, and true,
Died very long ago. He is not you.
As willingly would I forget this night
And think it also dead. You won the right
To claim your wager.

LA TOUR. Madam, it is I
Shall tell the Viscount, and with me shall die,
I promise you, this story. I shall pay
With what this wrecked life owns of life. I pray,
As God is good, your pardon. Fare you well.

CLAIRE. Wait — wait a moment. No, you shall not tell.

LA TOUR. And why not, madam?

CLAIRE. Hush!

[DE LANCIVAL *approaches, singing.*

DE LANCIVAL. He kissed her twice,
Or was it thrice?
Oh, what will kisses fetch?
You may buy a score
For a louis d'or.
Now, that 's a pretty catch.

Out with it, Claire.
What fortune had he? Did he really dare?
No need to go, La Tour. We all have heard.
Oh, there were bets on it. Right well it stirred
The inn's good fellows. I, too, had my bet
La Tour would lose.

CLAIRE. Indeed!

LA TOUR. At what was set
My beggared chance of fortune?

DE LANCIVAL. I forget.

CLAIRE. I, too, am curious.

DE LANCIVAL. I am not clear
How much it was; a very trifle, dear:
Some dozen louis — hardly worth one's while.

CLAIRE. Yet it might set the value of —

LA TOUR. A smile —

DE LANCIVAL. Who said a smile? 'T was nothing but a kiss.

CLAIRE. They make fair company. Perchance to miss
The gracious comment of a smile might take
Some value from the lips' resort, and make
Their rosy honors less.

DE LANCIVAL. What did I bet?
[*Searches his tablets.*
I had it yesternight. Just here 't was set,
Upon my honor!

LA TOUR. That 's a pious oath
That no commandment breaks.

DE LANCIVAL. St. Denis! Both
Are set to read me riddles. I for one —

LA TOUR. An easy riddle. Nowhere 'neath the sun
On land or sea the thing is found. Pardie!
Swear by a thing less mortal.

DE LANCIVAL. I make free
To think you mock me. But who was it won?

LA TOUR. I won, my lord. The trick was neatly done.

DE LANCIVAL. You won? Claire! Claire!

LA TOUR. Indeed, it so befell,
I won my ducats and some thoughts as well
A man could do without.
CLAIRE. It is not true.
The beau sire jests — no courteous thing to do.
LA TOUR. By Venus, I have but my word to give.
Here as she sat I kissed her, as I live!
DE LANCIVAL. Ye saints! The man has luck. Now, when I bring
This news to-night, the tavern roof will ring.
I never dared as much. To kiss her hand
Was my slim ration. I may understand
You really kissed her?
LA TOUR. Yes.
DE LANCIVAL. Well — as one may
Kiss any woman for a wager's play;
Had she kissed you I should have more to say.
CLAIRE. Then take the truth: I kissed him as he lay
A-sleeping in the garden. Now, sir, pray,
What is it more your lordship has to say?
DE LANCIVAL. You kissed La Tour?
CLAIRE. I did.
DE LANCIVAL. Now, by my sword —
LA TOUR. That's near kin to cursing. Well, my lord—
DE LANCIVAL. Is this a jest?
CLAIRE. That may somewhat depend
On how a maudlin tragedy shall end.
LA TOUR. I wait your orders, Viscount.
DE LANCIVAL. Nonsense! Why
Should you or I for such a trifle die?
Yet, as a friend, La Tour, I take fair leave
To doubt her story.

LA TOUR. Then, my lord,— I grieve
To put it coarsely,— does this lady lie?
I wait your answer. Is it she or I?
She doth depose to kissing one La Tour.
He swears in turn and is devoutly sure
He kissed the lady. Neither doth exclude
Belief in either. You, my lord, are shrewd.
Which is the sinner?

CLAIRE. Stay, sir.

DE LANCIVAL. You shall hear
From me to-morrow.

LA TOUR. And why not next year?
Had I once loved this gentle lady's face
His shrift were short, and small his chance of grace,
That dared to think those haughty lips could kiss
A man whom, dead, no man on earth would miss
Save some poor tapster. Sir, you seem to show
Small skill at riddles. Follow me.

CLAIRE. No, no.
Here must it end. A most unseemly brawl!
I 'll have no more of it. It does not call
For such grave consequences. Let it end.

DE LANCIVAL. With all my heart; and now, to surely mend
A needless quarrel, I, for one, agree
A kiss, my mischief-brewing maid, shall be
My own reward, his ransom.

CLAIRE. Here must stop
This tragedy, which seems inclined to drop
To something comic. I have long endured
A bond not of my making. Rest assured
This day forever breaks it.

LA TOUR. And beware,
Be very careful that you do not share
This tale with tap-room friends. Remember, too,
I lost this wager and will pay my due.

DE LANCIVAL. When once the wine is out comes folly in.
So said the Duke, and bet that you would win
And vow you did not. For my lady there,
She 'll change her mind to-morrow. I can bear
My tenth dismissal gaily.

[*He goes away singing.*

"I would I were a priest,"
Quoth the devil;
"I would shrive me twice a day
And then revel."
"I would I were a girl,"
Quoth the devil,
"With a lie in every curl."

LA TOUR. He shall rue
This insolence.

CLAIRE. No, René. What of you?

LA TOUR. No more of me. I rid you of a fool
Who went his way as unconcerned and cool
As though love's perfect roses knew to grow
On every hedge. Now have I also earned
The tardy wages of a fool, and learned
Too late the lesson of a vain regret
For what life might have been.

CLAIRE. And yet — and yet —

LA TOUR. By heaven, do not trifle with me now!
Take care!
Think ere you speak. Be very certain, Claire.
Hope was so dead. I count it no light thing
To give love's winter rose a day of spring.
You tremble, hesitate —
[*Voices from a distance call, "Claire, Claire!"* LA TOUR *seizes her hand as she turns to go.*
Ah, let me share
Your heart's wise counsel, Claire. I pray you spare
A man twice hurt. Give me a minute, one —
[*Voices call her. She moves away in haste.*
You cannot leave me thus.

CLAIRE. Sir, I have done.
You won your bet. But what, sir, gave the right
To think you won a heart?
[*The voices approach.*
Enough. Good-night.
[LA TOUR *looks after her until she is lost behind a hedge in the twilight.*

LA TOUR. The man is gone to heal his petty smart
With wine, sure balsam for a broken heart.
A comedy? Perhaps! And, by the rood,
The plot unlooked for and the acting shrewd:
A stately woman, resolute and sweet,
A bragging coward; and, to be complete,
This tavern hero, with, one ought to state,
King of the stage, Life's greatest actor, Fate!
I served her purpose well, and so once more —
I ever the sad loser as before —
We part. The usual ending, exeunt all.
And for the moral: It doth oft befall

One woman pays with usury the debts
Of that half-dozen maids a man forgets.

[*A glove cast over the hedge falls at* La Tour's *feet; he picks it up.*

I would it were my lord's. A woman's glove!

Claire. What rhymes to that?

La Tour. By every saint above,
How should I know?

Claire. Why not a woman's love?

1897.

BARABBAS

Tents in the hills north of Bethlehem. Evening, near to dusk. An aged Hebrew standing before a tent chants.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

AMPLIAS. YACOB. BARABBAS. DAVID.

YACOB.

When He opens the gates of the morning,
Bow lowly to pray.
When He closes the gates of the evening,
Thank Him for thy day.
Enter His courts with thanksgiving,
Enter with praise;
The gates of His Mercy are open
All gracious His ways.
[*He ceases and watches a lad, who comes quickly.*
Why are you here? I trust the flocks are safe.

DAVID.

The shepherd guards them and they cannot stray.
I saw two strangers coming; one seemed blind.
I thought them lost, but he who could not see
Said to the other, "Come, some tents are near,
We shall find friends." But then the other said,

"Or quite as likely Arab plunderers."
Then I thought fit to say, "A welcome waits;
My father's tents lie yonder. Follow me."
The young man answered, "We must trust your words.
This blind man found me wandering and starved;
He gave me food and water, saying, 'Come!'
I followed him in wonder and in doubt."
The blind man, father, did not wait or speak,
And I ran by in haste to tell of them.

YACOB.

It may be, son, he is not really blind;
A beggar's fraud, perhaps. What matters it!
Go quickly, son, and fetch the bread and salt.

[*He greets the two men as they draw near. The blind man touches head, heart, and lips, as he bends, remaining silent. His companion touches his forehead and bows. The host returns the Oriental salutation of the blind man.*

YACOB.

Take of my bread and salt; my tents are yours.

[*They accept.*

The peace of God which passeth other peace
Be with you ever.

BARABBAS. May your days be long,
Long in the land that once was ours alone.

[*Meanwhile* AMPLIAS, *the younger man, who has been uneasily watchful, murmurs to himself.*

AMPLIAS.

(*Aloud*) Ah! Hebrews both, and surely to be trusted,
May the great God of Chance be good to you,
And, fortune-favored, may you live as long
As you are happy and all gods are kind —
Your gods and mine. What better can I wish?

YACOB.

Enter and share with us our evening meal.
(*To* DAVID) Fetch me cool water from the jar; their feet
May well be heat-sore from the desert sands.
(*To* AMPLIAS) Our people hereabout say David's spring
More than another has refreshing power.

AMPLIAS (*At ease*).

I passed the spring at sunset days ago,
And paused to watch the tall, lithe maidens come
With balanced water-jars upon their heads
And hand on hip, a merry company.
More black than midnight was their wind-blown hair;
I lingered, jealous of the golden light
That turned to bronze its darkness. I could spin
Gay verses on them to make envious
The fair-haired beauties of Athenian homes.
[*The blind man sits silent.*

YACOB (*Pleased and laughing*).

Oft have I watched when in my younger days.
Their mothers came as now the daughters come;
I used to hear their gladsome chorus swell,

"Give us such lovers as came to the well,
Benaiah, Abishai, and Asahel."

AMPLIAS.

I caught gay fragments of some broken song,
My servants said was of the man you name,
This David, once a poet and a king.

YACOB.

Enter my tent. When you have cooled your feet,
Eaten and rested, you may hear the tale
Told as a brave man told it of himself.

BARABBAS.

An ancient story of the poet-king
When we were not the cringing slaves of Rome.
[*They lie at rest on the tent rugs while the lad bathes their feet and their hunger is satisfied.*

AMPLIAS.

My thanks, good lad. What is it you are called?

DAVID.

David.

AMPLIAS.

Indeed, a namesake of the king!
[*He lies at ease, with hands clasped behind his head.*
(*To* YACOB) You should know more of us — of me, at least.
Hunger and thirst are foes to courtesy!

YACOB.

We ask no name but guest of those to whom
We gladly give what God to us has given,
Who are His guests.

AMPLIAS. A gracious comment, yet
I claim the pleasant liberty to learn
Who is this gentle almoner of the gods.

YACOB.
My name is Yacob, and the lad, my son.
We, as you see, are merely shepherd folk,
Well pleased when some one from the busy world
Brings news a six-months old, or haply takes
A sheep or two for taxes, and we hear
Which Cæsar rules.

AMPLIAS. Your name will live with me.
A welcome guest of oft-reminding hours.
My name is Amplias, a Greek by birth,
Rich when at home, but now a stranded man
With what of life disastrous fortune left
When robber Arabs fell on me and took
My slaves, my beasts, and left me little else.
This blind man's kindness led me safely here.
What instinct guides me? When I questioned him,
Grateful and curious, he made brief replies
And said no needless word from morn to eve,
When talk or jest had eased a weary way.

YACOB (*Laughing*). Talk if you will. We are not quite unlearned,
And talk with one who knows the outer world
Is always welcome to a lonely man.

AMPLIAS.
I have seen men and cities, wrangled too
With mad philosophers or played with verse,
And won with wit the rose-crown of the feast;

Have wandered far, and now that I am fed
Am what I was not these three talk-starved days.
I doubt if empty nightingales could sing!
First for the song, and then, perhaps, the friend
Who led me hither will confess the charm
Shared with the swallow on his airy flight.
[*Barabbas has meanwhile been a silent listener. The lad sitting near him feels now the touch of the blind man as he speaks.*

BARABBAS.

You have lived half your life the weathercock
Of every wind that blows — of every breeze.

AMPLIAS.

Now there, at last, our friend has something said,
A weathercock's a rather useful thing —
A tireless sentinel, and much in use
To point sage morals for the young, when age
Has set sad limits to men's naughtiness
And left one luxury, the power to scold.

YACOB (*Pleasantly*).

A restless symbol of the joy of change
You Greeks so dearly love. Now then, blind friend,
Your answer to our merry weathercock.

BARABBAS (*To* YACOB).

He shall be answered when my hour has come.
I am called Barabbas;— once you knew me well.

YACOB (*Smiles*).

The storms of life, I fear, have wrecked for me
Too many memories of younger days,
And after all the name is not the man.

BARABBAS.

You were the Rabbi Yacob. Once we met —
Not since that day have I seen face of man.

AMPLIAS.

That seems to hint a story. May I ask —

BARABBAS.

Ask — you may ask in vain; what matters it!

AMPLIAS.

I pray you, pardon me; but really now
The talk goes back to something worth one's while,
Grows eloquent of opportunity,
And we may talk until the cool of night
Leaves silver moons upon the dewy grass.
That 's worth remembrance for a fertile hour.
[*Writes on his tablets.*

YACOB.

Thanks for a pleasant thought. Sing now, my son,
And keep some memory of those silver moons
We used to call the Arab spider-tents.
Forget us all, and be the poet-king.
[*The boy rises proudly and chants.*

DAVID.

This is a psalm of remembrance,
A song to be sung
Of three friends who loved me
When I was still young.
Dry-lipped from the desert
I slumbered, accurst

With dreams of far waters
That mocked at my thirst.
I stood, a boy shepherd,
Where guarding the brink
The maidens asked coyly
A song for a drink;
Or naked and heated
I lay where below
The sun-gift from Lebanon
Crumbled to snow,
Till gaily, dream-happy,
I raced through the shade
Where far-braided silver
Of rivulets strayed.
What joy for the kiss of
The virginal pool,
Whose chaste water clasped me
Delicious and cool,
Where the white lilies rocked
In the sun-cradled light.
When waking, and thirsting,
I moaned in the night,
And cried, with lost manhood,
"Who is there will bring
Where Philistines guard it,
A draft from the spring?"
At morning I saw them —
Men bleeding, and dumb,
Till Asahel murmured,
"My lord, we are come.
We smote in the mid-watch
The Philistine band;
We smote till the sword hilt

Was locked to the hand.
The vultures are stooping
To find at the spring
The dead who once guarded
The water we bring —
The water you asked for."
They gave to my fear
The skin bag men carry
When battle is near.
Ah, me, the mad longing!
"Far be it, oh Lord!"
On the sand of the desert
The water I poured:
"To the God of our fathers
I give what you gave;
I drink not, my brothers,
The blood of the brave!"

AMPLIAS.
That voice in Rome, my lad, would bring you gold.

BARABBAS.
Does it bring nothing but a thought of gold?

AMPLIAS (*Gaily*).
Nothing? Indeed! It opens golden mines
Of thought, conjecture, questions numberless.
The water wasted on the desert sand
Was such libation as at feasts we pour
To Bacchus, master of the festal hour.

BARRABAS.
He gave from need, and you of base excess.

AMPLIAS (*Pleasantly*).
No single motive ever rules a man.
The custom may be old, and vanity
Has many forms, as thus —

DAVID (*Aside to* YACOB). I hate the man.

AMPLIAS.
What says the lad?

YACOB. Now answer him, my son,
Say what you will. Speak out your honest thought.

DAVID.
I 'm very sorry that I sang for you;
You would have drunk the water. You, our guest,
Insult the memory of our hero-king.

AMPLIAS.
No man can say what such an hour may bring;
Decisions vary with the weather's change.

BARABBAS.
Bird-witted ever, these light-minded Greeks!

AMPLIAS.
Another hour of thirst might — I suppose
Those men drank deeply at the conquered spring?

DAVID (*Angrily*).
They did not drink.

AMPLIAS. And wherefore not, my lad?

DAVID.

I do not know; they went and came athirst.

YACOB.

The lad would say that had he been of them
To kill and quench his thirst had lost their gift
The nobleness of sacrificial honor.

DAVID.

I should have done as they did, now I know.
[*For a time no one speaks.* YACOB *rises and throws wide the tent-flaps.* AMPLIAS *also rises, takes water from the water-jar, and leaning against the tent-pole speaks.*

AMPLIAS.

When one goes wandering in that lesser world —
Why not the greater — which men call the mind,
He has adventures, like all travelers.—

BARABBAS (*Abruptly*). What find you now to mock a noble deed?

AMPLIAS.

While I flew carelessly the kites of thought,
A naughty thief of manners stole away
The gentlehood of courtesy. It was
A noble deed, my lad, and fitting well
The honor of a poet and a man.

YACOB.

Take you our thanks. I, too, was wandering,
What is this gift, which lacking, man is dead?

BARABBAS.

One of our rabbis said, "The wine of God."

AMPLIAS.

That's worth remembrance; just the thought-winged phrase
A poet finds in some unequaled hour.
[*Uses his tablets.*

YACOB.

Of all the gifts of God most wonderful,
Ocean or dewdrop, terrible or sweet.

AMPLIAS (*Gently, after a pause*).

Again a thought, for but a moment lost.
If your one God has power infinite,
It follows surely that He may at will
Give to Himself infinity of joy,
And in some isolated wonderment
Supremacy of happiness acquire,
The artist gladness in created things.

YACOB.

He saw, and said the world He made was good.

AMPLIAS.

I could suggest exceptions.

YACOB. There are none.
For one who sees things with the eyes of Christ.

BARABBAS.

The eyes of Christ!—Ah, me, the eyes of Christ!
[AMPLIAS *regarding him is silent a moment, and then says to Yacob:*

AMPLIAS.

That which your God called good I do not know.
A rose is beautiful, but is it good?
What has your Christ to do with it? For me
The world is but a very little place
Through which one carries this thing called himself.
One travels to escape monotony,
Or memories, or such absurd demands
On purse or heart as vex a man, and sow
With sleepy poppies every garden space
Where bloom the flowers of joy and idleness.
I am to love my neighbor as myself —
Or so my mother taught me. She, I saw,
Is trapped by this philosophy of Christ.
My neighbor! Well, but what becomes of me?

YACOB.

I trust, you listened.

AMPLIAS.

No, in came a girl,
And then we fled. But now I find again
In one strange phrase my sightless friend let fall
This Christ, of whom in Cæsar's palaces
Noble and knight in cautious whispers speak;
Gentile and Jew bend down in prayer to him,
Inheritors of some new hopefulness.

YACOB.

And you that love the old and mock the new,
Would you know more of Him who died for man?

AMPLIAS.

I said the world was small. Once long ago

When feasting gaily by the Ægean sea,
And we were glad with music, love, and wine,
One sober fool cast mid our idle talk
Words of this new revolt against the gods.
A Roman gentleman, a man in years,
Who sought the charm Falernian vineyards bring
To make the minute young, said quietly,
"I have some dim remembrance of the man.
An arrogant, rebellious priesthood asked,
As was the custom at their annual feast,
That I set free one criminal. They chose
A leader of revolt, and so to please
Unruly Jews I sent this Christ to death.
To-day men talk of this Judean serf;
I had quite forgotten it; but now, of late,
I sometimes wonder if —'twas but a chance,
The other man had been the crucified.—
Ho there, my girl, you of the golden hair!
Fill, fill my goblet."
There was Christ again!
A sudden silence fell upon the feast,
Till one beside me said, "That other man
Had on his side the cheerful God of Luck."

BARABBAS (*Rising*)
I was that other man.

YACOB. What, you! Not you!

AMPLIAS.
So cross men's fates. I said the world was small!

YACOB (*To* BARABBAS). *You* were the hero of the priest-led mob!

We both are old. I, too, am one of those
Who saw that day of wonder and of fear.

AMPLIAS.
I would hear more.

YACOB. Ask of Barabbas then.

BARABBAS.
And if my heart I open wide to him,
Will he but use for subtleties of talk
The strangest hour the world has ever known?

AMPLIAS.
I shall but use it as my reason bids.

BARABBAS.
I do not know. You took the gift of life
As takes a child some new and fragile toy,
And had no word of thankfulness to God.

AMPLIAS.
You had my thanks. What other god save Chance
Had I to thank for that large gift of life?
There is no God. The gods of Greece are dead;
The joy, the beauty and the grace of life
Are gone with them. What now is left to me?
Once as a boy I walked alert to see
Some prick-eared fawn go gaily prancing by,
Or sure I heard Diana's crescent bow
Release wild music from the parting string,
Whence silver arrows hurtled through the wood,
Where tramped with laughter all her buskined maids.

And white-limbed Venus, mistress of delight!
Ah, there's a goddess will outlive all gods!
I found her smiling through a dozen girls.

BARABBAS.

Fantastic mockeries of love or power,
The puppet fancies of men's poet-dreams.

AMPLIAS.

If the gods gave us poets, or they, gods,
Poet and god immortal dreamers were,
And from the faded pages of old books
In days unborn the ghosts of gods will rise
To preach a creed of beauty, love, and joy,
And be the comrades of a poet's hour.
One God! you say. No sooner is there one
Than our poor pagan nature finds a need
To personate anew His attributes,
Or so I gather from my mother's talk.

YACOB.

The night is with us. I would have my say
In sober morning hours before you leave.

AMPLIAS.

I find the midnight hour a wiser friend.
I mock at no man's creed, and least of all
At what beliefs my gentle mother holds.
But since are gone my beautiful dear gods,
I've lost the chastity of virgin faith;
Religion must be beautiful for me
My mother's faith is sorrowful and sad
And has no wings of joy. What else is left?

YACOB.

Ah, me, alas! When I was young as you,
Question and answer, all the strife of tongues,
Were more to me than honest search for truth.
It may be so with you, I judge you not;
But take with you to that strange world of sleep
From which we bring so very little back,
An old man's words of Him you seem to meet
Or here or there wherever you may stray.
In yonder little town upon the hill
Long years ago a child of God was born.
He taught, as none have taught, the creed of love;
He had but little life. In those few years
He wrought strange wonders, healed men's mortal ills,
To win the crude belief of simple souls;
Bade others follow him for what he was
And what his wisdom taught to win to him
The more reluctant mind of thoughtful men.
He put aside the Hebrew's dream of power
And, a mute king of truth, accepted death;
But ask Barabbas now how this man died.

BARABBAS.

I keep no count how many years have gone
Since I have told to any man this tale;
Though I am old, I do not seem to age
More than the sea that is forever young.
When, as Pilatus told, he set me free
To calm the priesthood, they were doubly pleased,
For I had led a weak and vain revolt
Which broke against the Roman's rock of power;
And thus my freedom doomed the silent man

To what I looked for, scourge and crucifix.
Set free! I shudder that it seemed so sweet.
Like to one drowning who sets foot on land,
I drew long breaths of open air and glad
Basked in the sun unseen for many a month,
I was the hero of an hour, and shared
The priesthood's hatred and their scorn of Him
Whose silence was the ransom of my life.
I followed them with thoughts at last set free
From night-long dreams of anguish on the cross
Till clanking fetters woke me to despair.
The man I watched upon his way to death
Bent stumbling 'neath his cross; and then and there
Some pity for this strange, insulting death
Held me to thought of what I might have been
Had he but made one eloquent appeal.
Why was he silent? He deserved to die.
False to our fathers' creed, he had the power
To lead a host to freedom, and for God
To call to battle all those crouching slaves,
Sweep clean the land from Moab to the sea
And hurl the Roman from his seat of pride!
A king of men! In some uplifting hour
The prophet hand that gave the Maccabee
Victorious visions and a sword of gold
Had won this wasted life to strike and slay.

[BARABBAS, *who had been standing, sinks down exhausted, and all are silent until* AMPLIAS *speaks.*

AMPLIAS.

You cannot leave me with this half-told tale.
How died this man of whom while yet he lived

Only Judea knew,— but now, though dead,
Lives like the risen sun with growing power?

YACOB.

I too would hear — I did not stay to see
The fading sunset of a noble life.

BARABBAS.

It is not easily told —

AMPLIAS. Nor lightly heard.

[BARABBAS *rises again feebly and leaning against the tent-pole is silent, and at last speaks.*

BARABBAS.

The mocking rabble slowly moved away,
While I in silence lingered, wondering
What secret held this suicidal death.
So rich a life with such calm courage spent,
While I who for my nation boldly dared
Had feared for months the scourging and the cross.
That I might be where now this brave man hung
Thrilled me at last with strange companionship
In His long torture's awful loneliness.
The guard lay idly round a waning fire,
The stern centurion stood indifferent;
Only the sob of women far away
Came and was lost. A soldier stirred the fire.
Some power of capture in the pleading eyes
Drew me yet nearer till all will was lost;
When that long wail of agonized appeal

Broke on the friendless silence of the night,
My eyes were His to hold — His eyes were mine.
The blood-stained cross shook with the throes of death;
The black hair heavy with the sweat of death,
Dropped o'er the fallen head, while suddenly
The earth rocked under me. I heard afar
The screams of women and the cries of men,
Uprooted trees, the crash of wall and tower;
And through it ever those beseeching eyes
I saw and fell, and reeling rose again
Blind, blind forever, as my soul had been,
With one last memory of those seeking eyes.

AMPLIAS (*Gravely*).

As strange a story as was ever told!
Why you it plainly cost so much to tell
Chose for the hearing one you pleased to call
A mere light-minded trifler, you may know;
At least you have the gratitude of thanks
From one too apt to hide his graver thought
Beneath a mask, but now would ask of you
What sequel has the tale no man could hear
Without distress for that man and for you.

BARABBAS.

No, it is not the end. For many a year
Through perils numberless my steps have gone,
The alms of death denied my beggared life.
From land to land a gentle child-like hand,
Or some low voice of warning guided me.
This, this at least, whatever else you doubt,
You cannot dare to question. Everywhere

This tender touch has led me unto men
Who are the servants of this Christ who died.
That hand, unfelt, still leads *you* near to Him.
My tale is told, and I must wander on.

YACOB.
Why not abide with us?

BARABBAS. No, I must go.
When that still guiding hand is lost to me,
Then I shall know that I have led to Christ
A soul that brings me to my journey's end;
Ah! then perhaps those eyes of agony
Will smile on me. I have so often tried,
And tried in vain.

AMPLIAS. Take then to sleep my thanks
For something more than merely food and life.

BARABBAS.
The peace of God be with you all to-night.

YACOB (*To* BARABBAS).
David, my son, will share with you his tent.
(*To* AMPLIAS) You will rest here with me, I trust, so long
As you find pleasure in our peaceful life.
[*The lad returns in haste.*

DAVID.
Barabbas asks for water —
[*The boy hesitates.*

YACOB. Now, my son,
Why are you waiting? Take with you what else
Our guest may need for comfort and for rest.

DAVID.
The man who came this evening to our tents,
As comes my dog to find me at the fold,
And for two days led here the man who sees —
[*Pauses.*

AMPLIAS.
What else, my lad?

DAVID (*Hesitating*) He did not seem to know
Which way to go; I led him like a child.
He only said, "Thank God, the eyes are gone!
The eyes are gone!" The man seemed very strange.

YACOB.
And was not troubled?

DAVID. No, he bade me say
The hand had left him, and the voice was still!
[YACOB *stands in thought.*

YACOB.
Perchance to-morrow he may be again
The man he was this morning. Go, my son.
[DAVID *leaves him.*

MORNING AT DAWN.

AMPLIAS.
Yes, I slept soundly, but those eyes he saw
Haunted my dreams. I go away to-day.

Now if your son will set me on the road,
Jerusalem will find me needed gold,
Friends of my people, and some days of rest.
I go just now to say my latest thanks
To this strange messenger with words as strange.
[*He leaves, and returns in haste much disturbed.*

AMPLIAS.
Your son is sleeping and I did not wake him.
The man is dead.

YACOB. Dead! Are you sure, my friend?

AMPLIAS.
Yes, he is dead. I have seen many die,
But never one who like this stranger seemed
To smile upon me through the face of death.

YACOB.
Then he is happy. He has found perhaps
The man his life has sought.

AMPLIAS. Perhaps, perhaps!

BAR HARBOR, *August* 1913.

NOTE.— This poem was first published, posthumously, in April 1914.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

THE MOTHER

"I will incline mine ear to the parable, and show my dark speech upon the harp."

Christmas! Christmas! merry Christmas! rang the bells. O God of grace!
In the stillness of the death-room motionless I kept my place,
While beneath my eyes a wanness came upon the little face,
And an empty smile that stung me, as the pallor grew apace.
Then, as if from some far distance, spake a voice: "The child is dead."
"Dead?" I cried. "Is God not good? What thing accursed is that you said?"
Swift I searched their eyes of pity, swaying, bowed, and all my soul,
Shrunken as a hand had crushed it, crumpled like a useless scroll
Read and done with, passed from sorrows: only with me lingered yet
Some dim sense of easeful comfort in the glad leave to forget.

But again life's scattered fragments, memories of joy and woe,
Tremulously came to oneness, as a storm-torn lake may grow
Quiet, winning back its pictures, when the wild winds cease to blow.
As if called for God's great audit came a vision of my years,
Broken gleams of youth and girlhood, all the woman's love and tears.
Marvelling, myself I saw as one another sees, and smiled,
Crooning o'er my baby dolls,— part a mother, part a child;
Then, half sorry, ceased to wonder why I left my silent brood,
Till the lessoning years went by me, and the instinct, love-renewed,
Stirred again life's stronger fibre, and were mine twain living things;
Bone of my bone! flesh of my flesh! Who on earth a title brings
Flawless as this mother-title, free from aught of mortal stain,
Innocent and pure possession, double-born of joy and pain?
Oh, what wonder these could help me, set me laughing, though I sobbed
As they drew my very heart out, and the laden breasts were robbed!
Tender buds of changeful pleasure came as come the buds of May,
Trivial, wondrous, unexpected, blossoming from day to day.

Ah! the clutch of tendril-fingers, that with nature's cunning knew
So to coil in sturdy grapple round the stem from which they grew.
Shall a man this joy discover? How the heart-wine to the brain
Rushed with shock of bliss when, startled, first I won this simple gain!
How I mocked those seeking fingers, eager for their earliest toy,
Telling none my new-found treasure! Miser of the mother's joy,
Quick I caught the first faint ripple, answering me with lip and eyes,
As I stooped with mirthful purpose, keen to capture fresh replies;
Oh, the pretty wonder of it, when was born the art to smile,
Or the new, gay trick of laughter filled my eyes with tears the while,—
Helpful tears, love's final language, when the lips no more can say,
Tears, like kindly prophets, warning of another, darker day.
Thus my vision lost its gladness, and I stood on life's dim strand,
Watching where a little love-lark drifted slowly from the land;
For again the bells seemed ringing Christmas o'er the snow of dawn,
And my dreaming memory hurt me with a hot face, gray and drawn,
And with small hands locked in anguish. Ah! those days of helpless pain!

Mine the mother's wrathful sorrow. Ah! my child,
hadst thou been Cain,
Father of the primal murder, black with every hideous
thought,
Cruel were the retribution; for, alas! what good is
wrought
When the very torture ruins all the fine machine of
thought?
So, with reeling brain I questioned, while the fevered
cheek grew white,
And at last I seemed to pass with him, released, to
death's dark night.
Seraph voices whispered round me. "God," they said,
"hath set our task,—
Thou to question, we to answer: fear not; ask what thou
wouldst ask."
Wildly beat my heart. Thought only, regnant, held its
sober pace,
Whilst, a wingèd mind, I wandered in the bleak domain
of space.
Then I sought and seeing marvelled at the mystery of
time,
Where beneath me rolled the earth-star in its first cha-
otic slime,
As bewildering ages passing with their cyclic changes
came,
Heaving land and 'whelming waters, ice and fierce vol-
canic flame,
Sway and shock of tireless atoms, pulsing with the throb
of force,
Whilst the planet, rent and shaken, fled upon its mighty
course.

Last, with calm of wonder hushed, I saw amid the surging strife
Rise the first faint stir of being and the tardy morn of life,—
Life in countless generations. Speechless, mercilessly dumb,
Swept by ravage of disaster, tribe on tribe in silence come,
Till the yearning sense found voices, and on hill, and shore, and plain,
Dreary from the battling myriads rose the birthright wail of pain.
God of pity! Son of sorrows! Wherefore should a power unseen
Launch on years of needless anguish this great agonized machine?
Was Himself who willed this torment but a slave to law self-made?
Or had some mad angel-demon here, unchecked and undismayed,
Leave to make of earth a Job; until the cruel game was played
Free to whirl the spinning earth-toy where his despot forces wrought,
While he watched each sense grow keener as the lifted creature bought
With the love-gift added sorrow, and there came to man's estate
Will, the helpless; thought, the bootless; all the death-ward war with fate?
Had this lord of trampled millions joy or grief, when first the mind,

Awful prize of contests endless, rose its giant foes to bind;
When his puppet tamed the forces that had helped its birth to breed,
And with growth of wisdom master, trained them to its growing need;
Last, upon the monster turning, on the serpent form of Pain,
Cried, "Bring forth no more in anguish;" with the arrows of the brain
Smote this brute thing that no use had save to teach him to refrain
When earth's baser instincts tempted, and the better thought was vain?
Then my soul one harshly answered, "Thou hast seen the whole of earth,
All its boundless years of misery, yea, its gladness and its mirth,
Yet thou hast a life created! Hadst thou not a choice? Why cast
Purity to life's mad chances, where defeat is sure at last?"
Low I moaned, "My tortured baby!" and a gentler voice replied,
"One alone thy soul can answer,—this, this only, is denied.
Yet take counsel of thy sadness. Should God give thy will a star
Freighted with eternal pleasure, free from agony and war,
Wouldst thou wish it? Think! Time is not for the souls who roam in space.
Speak! Thy will shall have its way. Be mother of one joyous race.

Choose! Yon time-worn world beneath thee thou shalt
people free from guilt.
There nor pain nor death shall ruin, never there shall
blood be spilt."
Then I trembled, hesitating, for I saw its beauty
born,
Saw a Christ-like world of beings where no beast by
beast was torn,
Where the morrows bred no sorrows, and the gentle
knew not scorn.
"Yet," I said, "if life have meaning, and man must be,
what shall lift
These but born for joy's inaction, these who crave no
added gift?
Let the world you bid me people hurl forever through the
gloom,
Tenantless, a blasted record of some huge funereal
doom,
Sad with unremembered slaughter, but a cold and lonely
tomb."

Deep and deeper grew the stillness, and I knew how vain
my quest.
Not by God's supremest angel is that awful secret
guessed.
Yet with dull reiteration, like the pendulum's dead
throb,
Beat my heart; a moaning infant, all my body seemed to
sob,
And a voice like to my baby's called to me across the
night
As the darkness fell asunder, and I saw a wall of light

Barred with crucificial shadows, whence a weary wind did blow
Shuddering. I felt it pass me heavy with its freight of woe.
Said a voice, "Behold God's dearest; also these no answer know.
These be they who paid in sorrow for the right to bid thee hear.
Had their lives in ease been cradled, had they never known a tear,
Feebly had their psalms of warning fallen upon the listening ear.
God the sun is God the shadow; and where pain is, God is near.
Take again thy life and use it with a sweetened sense of fear;
God is Father! God is Mother! Regent of a growing soul,
Free art thou to grant mere pleasure, free to teach it uncontrol.
Time is childhood! larger manhood bides beyond life's sunset hour,
Where far other foes are waiting; and with ever gladder power,
Still the lord of awful choice, O striving creature of the sod,
Thou shalt learn that imperfection is the noblest gift of God!
For they mock his ample purpose who but dream, beyond the sky,
Of a heaven where will may slumber, and the trained decision die
In the competence of answer found in death's immense reply."

Then my vision passed, and weeping, lo! I woke, of death bereft;
At my breast the baby brother, yonder there the dead I left.
For my heart two worlds divided: his, my lost one's; his, who pressed
Closer, waking all the mother, as he drew the aching breast,
While twain spirits, joy and sorrow, hovered o'er my plundered nest.

NEWPORT, *October* 1891.

OF DEATH AND OF ONE WHO FELL ON THE WAY

DEATH'S but one more to-morrow. Thou art gray
With many a death of many a yesterday.
O yearning heart that lacked the athlete's force
And, stumbling, fell upon the beaten course,
And looked, and saw with ever glazing eyes
Some lower soul that seemed to win the prize!
Lo, Death, the just, who comes to all alike,
Life's sorry scales of right anew shall strike.
Forth, through the night, on unknown shores to win
The peace of God unstirred by sense of sin!
There love without desire shall, like a mist
At evening precious to the drooping flower,
Possess thy soul in ownership, and kissed
By viewless lips, whose touch shall be a dower
Of genius and of winged serenity,

Thou shalt abide in realms of poesy,
Where soul hath touch of soul, and where the great
Cast wide to welcome thee joy's golden gate.
Freeborn to untold thoughts that age on age
Caressed sweet singers in their sacred sleep,
Thy soul shall enter on its heritage
Of God's unuttered wisdom. Thou shalt sweep
With hand assured the ringing lyre of life,
Till the fierce anguish of its bitter strife,
Its pain, death, discord, sorrow, and despair,
Break into rhythmic music. Thou shalt share
The prophet-joy that kept forever glad
God's poet-souls when all a world was sad.
Enter and live! Thou hast not lived before;
We were but soul-cast shadows. Ah, no more
The heart shall bear the burdens of the brain;
Now shall the strong heart think, nor think in vain.
In the dear company of peace, and those
Who bore for man life's utmost agony,
Thy soul shall climb to cliffs of still repose,
And see before thee lie Time's mystery,
And that which is God's time, Eternity;
Whence sweeping over thee dim myriad things,
The awful centuries yet to be, in hosts
That stir the vast of heaven with formless wings,
Shall cast for thee their shrouds, and, like to ghosts,
Unriddle all the past, till, awed and still,
Thy soul the secret hath of good and ill.

1889.

OF THE REMEMBERED DEAD

THERE is no moment when our dead lose power;
Unsignalled, unannounced they visit us.
Who calleth them I know not. Sorrowful,
They haunt reproachfully some venal hour
In days of joy, or when the world is near,
And for a moment scourge with memories
The money-changers of the temple-soul.
In the dim space between two gulfs of sleep,
Or in the stillness of the lonely shore,
They rise for balm or torment, sweet or sad,
And most are mine where, in the kindly woods,
Beside the childlike joy of summer streams,
The stately sweetness of the pine hath power
To call their kindred comforting anew.
Use well thy dead. They come to ask of thee
What thou hast done with all this buried love,
The seed of purer life? Or has it fallen unused
In stony ways and brought thy life no gain?
Wilt thou with gladness in another world
Say it has grown to forms of duty done
And ruled thee with a conscience not thine own?
Another world! How shall we find our dead?
What forceful law shall bring us face to face?
Another world! What yearnings there shall guide?
Will love souls twinned of love bring near again?
And that one common bond of duty held
This living and that dead, when life was theirs?
Or shall some stronger soul, in life revered,
Bring both to touch, with nature's certainty,

As the pure crystal atoms of its kind
Draws into fellowship of loveliness?

1889.

E. D. M.

THERE is a heart I knew in other days,
Not ever far from any one day's thought;
One pure as are the purest. All the years
Of battle or of peace, of joy or grief,
Take him no further from me. Oftentimes,
When the sweet tenderness of some glad girl
Disturbs with tears, full suddenly I know
It is because one memory ever dear
Is matched a moment with its living kin.
Or when at hearing of some gallant deed
My throat fills, and I may not dare to say
The quick praise in me, then I know, alas!
'T is by this dear dead nobleness my soul is stirred.
He lived, he loved, he died. Brief epitaph!
What hour of duty in the long grim wards
Poisoned his life, I know not. Painfully
He sickened, yearning for the strife of War
That went its thunderous way unhelped of him;
And then he died. A little duty done;
A little love for many, much for me,
And that was all beneath this earthly sun.

1889.

PAINED UNTO DEATH

E. K. M.

One life I knew was a psalm, a terrible psalm of pain,
Dark with disaster of torment, body and brain
Racked as if God were not, and hope a dream
Some demon wrought to bid this soul blaspheme
All life's remembered sweetness. "Peace, be still,"
I hear her spirit whisper. "His the will
That from some unseen bow of purpose sped
Thy sorrow and my torture." God of dread!
The long sad years that justify the dead,
The long sad years at last interpreted:
Serene as clouds that over stormy seas
At sunset rise with mystery of increase,
One with the passionate deep that gave them birth,
Her gentled spirit rose on wings of peace,
And was and was not of this under earth.

1890.

THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH

Art glad with the gladness of youth in thy veins,
In thy hands, for the spending, earth's joy and its gains?
Lo! winged with storm shadows the torturers come,
And to-night, or to-morrow, thy lips shall be dumb,
Thy hands wet with pain-thrills, thy nerves, that were strung
To fineness of sense by earth's pleasure, be wrung

With pangs the beast knows not, nor he who in tents
Lives lone in the desert, and knoweth not whence
The bread of the morrow. Pain like to a mist
Goeth up from the earth, and is lost, and none wist
Why ever it cometh, why ever it waits
In the heart of our loves, like a foe in our gates.
Lo! summer and sunshine are over the land,—
Who marshalled yon billows? what wind of command
Drives ever their merciless march on the strand?
Thus, dateless, relentless, the children of strife
None have seen, on the sun-lighted beaches of life
March ever the ravening billows of pain.
O heart that is breaking, go ask of the brain
If aught of God's spending is squandered in vain?
Yea, where is the sunshine of centuries dead?
Yea, where are the raindrops of yesterday shed?
God findeth anew his lost light in the force
That holdeth the world on its resolute course,
And surely, as surely the madness of pain
Shall pass into wisdom, and come back again
An angel of courage if thou art the one
That knoweth to deal with the lightnings that stun
To blindness the many. A thousand shall fall
By the waysides of life, and in helplessness call
For the death-alms which nature gives freely to all;
And one, like the jewel, shall break the fierce light
That blindeth thy vision, and flash through the night
The colors that read us its meaning aright.

1890.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

THE CENTURION

A dark cell of the Circus Maximus. The Centurion and his child.

"FATHER! father; hold me closer. Are they lions
that I hear?
Once beside the Syrian desert where we camped I heard
them near
While our servants made us music; and there's music
now. 'T was night,
And 't is very dark here, father. There we had the stars
for light.
Father, father! that was laughter, and the noise of many
hands.
Why is it they make so merry? Shall we laugh soon?
On the sands
How you smiled to see my terror! 'What,' you said, 'A
Roman maid
Tremble in the Legion's camp! A Roman maiden and
afraid!'

"Hush! Who called? Who called me? Mother! Surely
that was mother's voice."
But the gray centurion, trembling, murmured, "Little
one, rejoice!"
Yet a single moan of sorrow broke the guard his man-
hood set,
While the sweetness of her forehead with a storm of
tears was wet.

And he answered, as she questioned, "That was but the rain God sends
To the flowers he loves,"— then lower,—"Death and I are friends."

"Father, father, now 't is quiet. Was it mother? I am cold.
Who, I wonder, feeds my carp? who, I wonder, at the fold
Combs my lambs? who prunes my roses? Think you they will keep us long
From the sunshine? Hark, the lions! Ah! they must be fierce and strong!"

"Peace, my daughter. Soon together we shall walk through gardens fair,
Where the lilies psalms are singing, and the roses whisper prayer."
"Who will bring us to the garden?" "Christ! Thou wilt not hear him call;
Suddenly wide doors shall open; on thy eyes the sun shall fall;
Thou shalt see God's lions, waiting, and, above, a living wall.
Yea, ten thousand faces waiting, come to help our holiday,
Music, flowers, and the Cæsar.— Rest upon my shoulder, lay
One small hand in mine,— and peace. A moment I would think and pray.

"I am sore with shame and scourging, I, a Roman! I, a knight!
Yea, if nobly born, the nobler for the birth of higher light.

Was it pain, and was it shame? The lictor's rods fell on
a man;
On the God-man fell those scourges, and the bitter drops
that ran
Flowed from eyes that wept for millions, came of pain
none else can know,
An eternity of anguish, counted as the blood drops flow.
Mine is but an atom's torment; mine shall bring eternal
gain;
His, the murder pangs of ages, paid with usury of pain.

"Art thou weary of the darkness? Art thou cold, my
little maid?
Hast thou sorrow of my sorrow? Kiss my cheek. Be
not dismayed.
Lo, the nearness of one moment setteth age to lonely
thought,
Would his will but make us one ere yet his perfect will
be wrought.
That may not be. Once, once only Love must drop the
hand of love."
"Father, father! Hark, the lions!" "Peace, my little
one, my dove;
Soon thy darkened cage will open, soon the voice of
Christ will say,
'Come and be among my lilies, where the golden foun-
tains play,
And an angel legion watches, and forever it is day.'
So, my hand upon thy shoulder. Thou, so little! I, so
tall!
Now, one kiss — earth's last! My darling."— Back the
iron gate-bolts fall.
Lo, the gray arena 's quiet, and the faces waiting all,

Waiting, and the lions waiting, while the gray centurion smiled,
As, beneath the white velarium, fell God's sunlight on the child:
For a gentle voice above them murmured, "Forth, and have no fear,"
And the little maiden answered, "Lo, Christ Jesu, I am here!"

1890.

A CANTICLE OF TIME

Hours of grieving,
Hours of thought;
Hours of believing,
Hours of naught.
Hours when the thieving
Fingers of doubt steal
Heart riches, faith bought.
Hours of spirit dearth,
Earthy, and born of earth,
When the racked universe
Is as a hell, or worse.
Hours when the curtain, furled
Backward, revealed to us
Sorrowful sin-gulfs
Self had concealed from us.
Hours of wretchedness;
Palsies that blind.
Hours none else can guess,
When the dumb mind

Faints, and heart wisdom
Is all that we find.
Hours when the cloud
That hides the unknown,
A cumbering shroud,
About us is thrown.
Hours that seem to part
Goodness and God.
Hours of fierce yearning,
When fruit of love's earning
Is shred from the heart.
Hours when no angel
Hovers o'er life.
Hours when no Christ-God
Pities our strife.
Yea, such is life!

Slowly the hours
Gather to years;
They deal with our tears
That grief be not vain,
Gently as flowers
Deal with the rain.
Slowly the hours
Gather to years,
Sowing with roses
The graves of our fears.
Lo! the dark crosses
Of torture's completeness
Mistily fade into
Symbols of sweetness,
And behold it is evening.
Swift through the grass

Shuttles of shadow
Silently pass,
Weaving at last
Tapestries sombre,
Solemn and vast,
And behold it is night!
Silence profound,
Solitude vacant
Of touch and of sound
Thy being doth bound.
This is death's loneliness,
Answerless, pitiless!
What of thee was king,
Let it crownless descend
From its tottering throne;
Lo! thou art alone,
And behold, 't is the end!

What sayeth the soul?
"God wasteth naught.
Thinkest, in vain
He sowed in thy childhood
Thought-seed in the brain,
And the joy to create,
Like his own joy, and will,
Like a fragment of fate
For the godlike control
Of the heaven of thy angels,
The loves of thy soul?
Ay, strong for the rule
Of devils that tempt thee,
Of demons that fool?
Shall so much of Him

Merely perish in haste,
Just stumble, and die,
And Death be a jester's mad riddle
Without a reply?
And Life naught but waste?
Behold, it is day,"
Saith the soul.

1890.

LINCOLN

CHAINED by stern duty to the rock of State,
His spirit armed in mail of rugged mirth,
Ever above, though ever near to earth,
Yet felt his heart the cruel tongues that sate
Base appetites, and foul with slander, wait
Till the keen lightnings bring the awful hour
When wounds and suffering shall give them power.
Most was he like to Luther, gay and great,
Solemn and mirthful, strong of heart and limb.
Tender and simple too; he was so near
To all things human that he cast out fear,
And, ever simpler, like a little child,
Lived in unconscious nearness unto Him
Who always on earth's little ones hath smiled.

NEWPORT, *October* 1891.

COLERIDGE AT CHAMOUNY

I WOULD I knew what ever happy stone
Of all these dateless records, gray and vast,
Keeps silent memory of that sunrise lone
When, lost to earth, the soul of Coleridge passed
From earthly time to one immortal hour:
There thought's faint stir woke echoes of the mind
That broke to thunder tones of mightier power
From depths and heights mysterious, undefined;
As when the soft snows, drifting from the rock,
Rouse the wild clamor of the avalanche shock.

Who may not envy him that awful morn
When marvelling at his risen self he trod,
And thoughts intense as pain were fiercely born,
Till rose his soul in one great psalm to God.
A man to-morrow weak as are the worst,
A man to whom all depths, all heights belong,
Now with too bitter hours of weakness cursed,
Now winged with vigor, as a giant strong
To take our groping hearts with tender hand,
And set them surely where God's angels stand.

On peaks of lofty contemplation raised,
Such as shall never see earth's common son,
High as the snowy altar which he praised,
An hour's creative ecstasy he won.
Yet, in this frenzy of the lifted soul
Mocked him the nothingness of human speech,
When through his being visions past control
Swept, strong as mountain streams.— Alas! to reach

Words equal-winged as thought to none is given,
To none of earth to speak the tongue of heaven.

The eagle-flight of genius gladness hath,
And joy is ever with its victor swoop
Through sun and storm. Companionless its path
In earthly realms, and, when its pinions droop,
Faint memories only of the heavenly sun,
Dim records of ethereal space it brings
To show how haughty was the height it won,
To prove what freedom had its airy wings.
This is the curse of genius, that earth's night
Dims the proud glory of its heavenward flight.

1888.

TENNYSON

The larks of song that high o'erhead
Sung joyous in my boyhood's sky,
Save one, are with the silent dead,
Those larks that knew to soar so high.

But still with ever surer flight,
One singer of unfailing trust
Chants at the gates of morn and night
Great songs that lift us from the dust,

And heavenward call tired hearts that grieve,
Beneath the vast horizon given
With larger breadth of morn and eve,
To this one lark alone in heaven.

1890.

CERVANTES

THERE are who gather with decisive power
The mantle of contentment round their souls,
And face with strange serenity the hour
Of pain, or grief, or any storm that rolls
Destruction o'er the tender joys of life.

There are whom some great quest of heart or brain
Keeps even-poised, whatever fate the years
May fetch to mock with lesser loss or gain,
And find brief joy in smiles, small grief in tears,
And tranquil take the hurts of human strife.

A few there be who, spendthrift heirs of mirth
Immortal, mock the insolence of fate,
And with a breath of jesting round the earth
Ripple men's cheeks with smiles, and gay, elate,
Sit ever in the sunshine of their mood.

Oh, royal master of all merry chords,
Of every note in mirth's delightful scale,
To thee was spared no pang that earth affords,
Nor any woe of sorrow's endless tale,—
Want, prison, wounds, all that has man subdued;

But, light of soul, as if all life were joy,
Forever armed with humor's shining mail,
True-hearted, gallant, free from scorn's alloy,
When life was beggared of its best, and frail
Grew hope, 't is said thou still wert lord of smiles.

This could I wish; and yet it well may be
Thy heart smiled not, for wit, like fairy gold,
Mayhap won naught for him who scattered glee,
No help for him by whom the jest was told,—
The world's sad fool, whose ever-ready wiles

Rang the glad bells of laughter down the years,
And cheated pain with merry mysteries,
And from a prison cell, the twins of tears,
Sent forth his Don and Squire to win at ease
Such joy of mirth as his could never be.

Ah, who can say! His latest day of pain
Took Shakespeare's kindred soul. I trust they met
Where smiles are frequent, and the saddest gain
What earth denies, the privilege to forget
"The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely."

But where he sleeps, the land which gave him birth,
And gave no more to him, its greatest child,
Knows not to-day. Some levelled heap of earth,
Some nameless stone, lies o'er him who beguiled
So many a heart from thinking on its pain.

Yet I can fancy that at morning there
The birds sing gladder, and at evening still
The peasant, resting from his day of care,
Goes joyous thence with some mysterious thrill
Of lightsome mirth, whose cause he seeks in vain.

October 1888.

OF A POET

WRITTEN FOR A CHILD

He sang of brooks, and trees, and flowers,
Of mountain tarns, of wood-wild bowers,
The wisdom of the starry skies,
The mystery of childhood's eyes,
The violet's scent, the daisy's dress,
The timid breeze's shy caress.
Whilst England waged her fiery wars
He praised the silence of the stars,
And clear and sweet as upland rills
The gracious wisdom of her hills.
Save once when Clifford's fate he sang,
And bugle-like his lyric rang,
He prized the ways of lowly men,
And trod, with them, the moor and fen.
Fair Nature to this lover dear
Bent low to whisper or to hear
The secrets of her sky and earth,
In gentle Words of golden Worth.

1886.

HERNDON

Ay, shout and rave, thou cruel sea,
In triumph o'er that fated deck,
Grown holy by another grave —
Thou hast the captain of the wreck.

No prayer was said, no lesson read,
O'er him, the soldier of the sea;
And yet for him, through all the land,
A thousand thoughts to-night shall be.

And many an eye shall dim with tears,
And many a cheek be flushed with pride;
And men shall say, There died a man,
And boys shall learn how well he died!

Ay, weep for him, whose noble soul
Is with the God who made it great;
But weep not for so proud a death,—
We could not spare so grand a fate.

Nor could Humanity resign
That hour which bade her heart beat high,
And blazoned Duty's stainless shield,
And set a star in Honor's sky.

O dreary night! O grave of hope!
O sea, and dark, unpitying sky!
Full many a wreck these waves shall claim
Ere such another heart shall die.

Alas, how can we help but mourn
When hero bosoms yield their breath!
A century itself may bear
But once the flower of such a death;

So full of manliness, so sweet
With utmost duty nobly done;
So thronged with deeds, so filled with life,
As though with death that life begun.

It *has* begun, true gentleman!
No better life we ask for thee;
Thy Viking soul and woman heart
Forever shall a beacon be,—

A starry thought to eager souls,
To teach it is not best to live;
To show that life has naught to match
Such knighthood as the grave can give.

1857.

THE TOMBS OF THE REGICIDES

LUDLOW AND BROUGHTON

Alone on the vine-covered hillside,
Set gray 'gainst the ivy-clad walnuts,
Stands, sombre as Calvin, and barren
Of crucifix, altar, and picture,
The church of St. Martin. A stranger,
I stood where the pride of its arches
Looks scorn on the Puritan's sadness.
Not prouder for Switzerland's annals
The glory of Morat or Sempach
Than these darkened tablets that tell us
How gladly for Ludlow and Broughton
She lifted the shield of protection,
How sternly she answered the summons
To render her guests to the headsman.
The parents that gave their true soul-life
Were England and Freedom. Ah, surely
With courage and conscience they honored

That parentage costly of sorrow,
And did the just deed and abided.
Long, long were the days that God gave them
With friendships and peace in this refuge,
Where sadly they yearned for the home-land,
And saw their great Oliver's England
Bowed low in the dust of dishonor.

VEVAY, *August* 19, 1888.

KEARSARGE

SUNDAY in Old England:
  In gray churches everywhere
The calm of low responses,
  The sacred hush of prayer.

Sunday in Old England;
  And summer winds that went
O'er the pleasant fields of Sussex,
  The garden lands of Kent,

Stole into dim church windows
  And passed the oaken door,
And fluttered open prayer-books
  With the cannon's awful roar.

Sunday in New England:
  Upon a mountain gray
The wind-bent pines are swaying
  Like giants at their play;

Across the barren lowlands,
  Where men find scanty food,
The north wind brings its vigor
  To homesteads plain and rude.

Ho, land of pine and granite!
  Ho, hardy northland breeze!
Well have you trained the manhood
  That shook the Channel seas,

When o'er those storied waters
  The iron war-bolts flew,
And through Old England's churches
  The summer breezes blew;

While in our other England
  Stirred one gaunt rocky steep,
When rode her sons as victors,
  Lords of the lonely deep.

LONDON, *July* 20, 1864.

HOW THE CUMBERLAND WENT DOWN

GRAY swept the angry waves
  O'er the gallant and the true,
Rolled high in mounded graves
  O'er the stately frigate's crew —
Over cannon, over deck,
Over all that ghastly wreck,—
    When the Cumberland went down.

Such a roar the waters rent
As though a giant died,
When the wailing billows went
Above those heroes tried;
And the sheeted foam leaped high,
Like white ghosts against the sky,—
As the Cumberland went down.

O shrieking waves that gushed
Above that loyal band,
Your cold, cold burial rushed
O'er many a heart on land!
And from all the startled North
A cry of pain broke forth,
When the Cumberland went down.

And forests old, that gave
A thousand years of power
To her lordship of the wave
And her beauty's regal dower,
Bent, as though before a blast,
When plunged her pennoned mast,
And the Cumberland went down.

And grimy mines that sent
To her their virgin strength,
And iron vigor lent
To knit her lordly length,
Wildly stirred with throbs of life,
Echoes of that fatal strife,
As the Cumberland went down.

Beneath the ocean vast,
  Full many a captain bold,
By many a rotting mast,
  And admiral of old,
Rolled restless in his grave
As he felt the sobbing wave,
    When the Cumberland went down.

And stern Vikings that lay
  A thousand years at rest,
In many a deep blue bay
  Beneath the Baltic's breast,
Leaped on the silver sands,
And shook their rusty brands,
    As the Cumberland went down.

1862.

MY CASTLES IN SPAIN

Ho, joyous friend with beard of brown!
A half-hour back 't was gray;
A half-hour back you wore a frown,
But now the world looks gay.
For here the mirror's courtly grace
Cheats you with a youthful face,
And here the poet clock of time
Each happy minute counts in rhyme;
And here the roses never die,
And "Yes" is here Love's sole reply.
Gladder land can no man gain
Than my mystic realm of Spain.

Come with me, for I am one
Hidalgo-born of Aragon;
I will show you why I choose
Thus to live in Andalouse.
Across the terrace, up the stair,
Our steps shall wander to and fro
Where pensive stand the statues fair,
And murmur songs of long ago.
Or will you see my pictures old,
The landscapes hung for my delight
In window-frames of fretted gold,
Where, glowing, shines in color bright
That Claude of mine at full of noon,
When the ripe, eager blood of June
Stirs bird and leaf, and everywhere
The world is one gay love-affair?
Or shall we linger, looking west,
Just when my Turner 's at its best,
To watch the cold stars, one by one,
Crawl to the embers of the sun,
Whilst all the gray sierra snows
Are ruddy with the twilight rose?
Believe me, artists there are none
Like those of mine in Aragon;
Nor painter would I care to choose
Beside the sun of Andalouse.
Or shall we part the shining leaves
Down drooping from the vine-clad eaves,
And see, amidst the sombre pines,
The maiden take a shameless kiss?
Around his neck her white arm twines,
And still is sweet their changeless bliss.
I know she cannot aught refuse,

For that 's the law in Andalouse,
And ever 'neath this happy sun
There is no sin in Aragon.
Or shall we cast yon casement wide,
And see the knights before us ride,
The charging Cid, the Moors that flee?
Grim although the battles be
That through my window-frames I see,
No death is there, nor any pain,
Because on my estates in Spain
All passions gaily run their course,
But lack the shadow-fiend remorse.
Something 't is to make one vain
Thus to be grandee of Spain;
For the wine of Andalouse
All the world a man might lose,
Could he see what rosy shapes
Trample out my Spanish grapes,
Know how pink the feet that bruise
My gold-green grapes of Andalouse.
Ah, but if you 're not a don,
Drink no wine of Aragon.
Dreamland loves and elfin flavors,
Gay romances, fairy favors,
Moonlit mists and glad confusions,
Youth's brief mystery of delusions,
Racing, chasing, haunt the brain
Of him who drinks this wine of Spain.
Where the quarterings were won
That make of me a Spanish don
No one asks in Aragon.
Never blood of Bourbon grew
So magnificently blue;

Blood have I that once was Dante's;
Kinsman am I of Cervantes.
Come and see what nobles fine
Make my proud ancestral line:
In my gallery set apart,
Lo where art interprets art.
Yes, you needs must like it well,—
Shakespeare's face by Raphael.
Ah, 't is very nobly done,
But that 's the air of Aragon.
He left me that which till life ends
Is surely mine,— the best of friends;
And chiefly one, if you would know,
I love of all, Mercutio.
Velasquez? Ay, he knew a man,
And well he drew my Puritan,
With eyes too full of heaven's light
To dream our day as aught but night.
If my soul stirs swift at wrong,
This sire made that instinct strong.
Da Vinci touched with love the face
That keeps for me young Surrey's grace.
And that,— ah, that is one to like,
My kinsman Sidney, by Vandyke.
Some words he gave, of which bereft
My life were poorer. There, to left
Are they whose rills of English song
Unto my royal blood belong.
For poet, painter, priest, and lay
Went to make my Spanish clay;
And here away in Andalouse,
Whatever mood my soul may choose,
The poet's joy, the soldier's force,

Finds for me its parent source
Where, along the pictured wall,
Hero voices on me call,
With the falling of the dews,
In Aragon or Andalouse,
When the mystic shadows troop,
When my fairy flowers droop,
And the joyous day is done
In Andalouse or Aragon.

GRANADA, *May* 27, 1888.

DREAMLAND

Up Anchor! Up anchor!
Set sail and away!
The ventures of dreamland
Are thine for a day.
Yo, heave ho!
Aloft and alow
Elf sailors are singing,
Yo, heave ho!
The breeze that is blowing
So sturdily strong
Shall fill up thy sail
With the breath of a song.
A fay at the mast-head
Keeps watch o'er the sea;
Blown amber of tresses
Thy banner shall be;
Thy freight the lost laughter

That sad souls have missed,
Thy cargo the kisses
That never were kissed.
And ho, for a fay maid
Born merry in June,
Of dainty red roses
Beneath a red moon.
The star-pearls that midnight
Casts down on the sea,
Dark gold of the sunset
Her fortune shall be.
And ever she whispers,
More tenderly sweet,
"Love am I, love only,
Love perfect, complete.
The world is my lordship,
The heart is my slave;
I mock at the ages,
I laugh at the grave.
Wilt sail with me ever
A dream-haunted sea,
Whose whispering waters
Shall murmur to thee
The love-haunted lyrics
Dead poets have made
Ere life had a fetter,
Ere love was afraid?"
Then up with the anchor!
Set sail and away!
The ventures of loveland
Are thine for a day.

NEWPORT, 1890.

THE QUAKER LADY

'Mid drab and gray of moldered leaves,
The spoil of last October,
I see the Quaker lady stand
In dainty garb and sober.

No speech has she for praise or prayer,
No blushes, as I claim
To know what gentle whisper gave
Her prettiness a name.

The wizard stillness of the hour
My fancy aids: again
Return the days of hoop and hood
And tranquil William Penn.

I see a maid amid the wood
Demurely calm and meek,
Or troubled by the mob of curls
That riots on her cheek.

Her eyes are blue, her cheeks are red,—
Gay colors for a Friend,—
And Nature with her mocking rouge
Stands by a blush to lend.

The gown that holds her rosy grace
Is truly of the oddest;
And wildly leaps her tender heart
Beneath the kerchief modest.

It must have been the poet Love
  Who, while she slyly listened,
Divined the maiden in the flower,
  And thus her semblance christened.

Was he a proper Quaker lad
  In suit of simple gray?
What fortune had his venturous speech,
  And was it "yea" or "nay"?

And if indeed she murmured "yea,"
  And throbbed with worldly bliss,
I wonder if in such a case
  Do Quakers really kiss?

Or was it some love-wildered beau
  Of old colonial days,
With clouded cane and broidered coat,
  And very artful ways?

And did he whisper through her curls
  Some wicked, pleasant vow,
And swear no courtly dame had words
  As sweet as "thee" and "thou"?

Or did he praise her dimpled chin
  In eager song or sonnet,
And find a merry way to cheat
  Her kiss-defying bonnet?

And sang he then in verses gay,
  Amid this forest shady,

The dainty flower at her feet
Was like his Quaker lady?

And did she pine in English fogs,
Or was his love enough?
And did she learn to sport the fan,
And use the patch and puff?

Alas! perhaps she played quadrille,
And, naughty grown and older,
Was pleased to show a dainty neck
Above a snowy shoulder.

But sometimes in the spring, I think,
She saw, as in a dream,
The meeting-house, the home sedate,
The Schuylkill's quiet stream;

And sometimes in the minuet's pause
Her heart went wide afield
To where, amid the woods of May,
A blush its love revealed.

Till far away from court and king
And powder and brocade,
The Quaker ladies at her feet
Their quaint obeisance made.

NEWPORT, 1889.

THE QUAKER GRAVEYARD

Four straight brick walls, severely plain,
A quiet city square surround;
A level space of nameless graves,—
The Quakers' burial-ground.

In gown of gray, or coat of drab,
They trod the common ways of life,
With passions held in sternest leash,
And hearts that knew not strife.

To yon grim meeting-house they fared,
With thoughts as sober as their speech,
To voiceless prayer, to songless praise,
To hear the elders preach.

Through quiet lengths of days they came
With scarce a change to this repose;
Of all life's loveliness they took
The thorn without the rose.

But in the porch and o'er the graves,
Glad rings the southward robin's glee,
And sparrows fill the autumn air
With merry mutiny;

While on the graves of drab and gray
The red and gold of autumn lie,
And wilful Nature decks the sod
In gentlest mockery.

1879.

DOMINIQUE DE GOURGUES

In his cheerful Norman orchard
Lay De Gourgues of Mont Marsan,
Gascon to the core, and merry,
Just a well-contented man,

With his pipe, that comrade constant,
Won in sorrowful Algiers,
In the slave's brief rest at evening
Left for curses and for tears.

Peacefully he pondered, gazing
Where his plough-ribbed cornfields lay,
With their touch of hopeful verdure,
Waiting patient for the May.

Joyous from the terrace o'er him
Came the voice of wife and child,
And the sunlit smoke curled upward
As the gaunt old trooper smiled.

"St. Denis," quoth the stout De Gourgues,
"Yon beehive's ever busy hum
Doth like me better than the noise
Of the musketoon and drum.

"Tough am I, though this skin of mine
By steel and bullet well is scarred,
Like those round pippins overhead
By the thrushes pecked and marred.

"Forsooth I 'm somewhat autumn-ripe,
Yet like my apples sound and red.
And life is sweet," said stout De Gourgues,
"Yea, verily sweet," he said.

"Three things there were I once did love —
One that gay jester of Navarre,
And one to sack a Spanish town,
And one the wild wrath of war.

"And two there were I hated well —
One that carrion beast, a Moor,
And one that passeth him for spite,
That 's a Spaniard, rest you sure."

Still he smoked, and musing murmured,
"There be three things well I like,
My pipe, my ease, this quiet life,
Better far than push of pike.

"And to-day there be two I love
Who lured me out of the strife,
The lad who plays with my rusty blade,
And the little Gascon wife.

"Parbleu! parbleu!" cried gray De Gourgues,
For at his side there stood
A soldier, scarred and worn and white,
In a cuirass dark with blood.

"Ventre Saint Gris! good friend, halloa!
Art sorely hurt, and how? and why?
Art Huguenot? Here 's help at need:
Or Catholic? What care I!"

No motion had the white wan lips,
The mail-clad chest no breathing stirred,
Though clear as rings a vengeful blade
Fell every whispered word.

"That Jean Ribaut am I
Who sailed for the land of flowers;
Fore God our tryst is surely set;
I wearily count the hours."

And slowly rose the steel-clad hand,
And westward pointing stayed as set:
"Thy peace is gone! No morn shall dawn
Will let thee e'er forget.

"Thy brothers, the dead, lie there,
Where only the winds complain,
And under their gallows walk
The mocking lords of Spain.

"If ever this France be dear,
And honor as life to thee,
Thy wife, thy child are naught to-day,
Thy errand 's on the sea."

"St. Denis to save!" cried stout De Gourgues,
"One may dream, it seems, by day."
The man was gone!— but where he stood
A rusted steel glove lay.

"I 've heard — yea twice — this troublous tale,
It groweth full old indeed;
But old or new, my sword is sheathed
For ghost or king or creed."

Full slow he turned and climbed the hill,
And thrice looked back to see:
"The dream! The glove!— How came it there? —
What matters a glove to me?"

But day by day as one distraught
He stood, or gazed upon the board;
Nor heard the voice of wife or boy,
Nor took of the wine they poured.

He saw his bannerol flutter forth,
As tossed by the wind of fight,
And watched his sheathed sword o'er the hearth
Leap flashing to the light.

He told her all. "Now God be praised!"
She cried, while the hot tears ran;
"She little loves who loves not more
His honor than the man."

His lands are sold. A stranger's hand
The juice of his grapes shall strain;
Another, too, shall reap the hopes
He sowed with the winter grain.

His way was o'er the windy seas,
But, sailed he fast or sailed he slow,
He saw by day, he saw by night,
The face of Jean Ribaut.

The sun rose crimson with the morn,
Or set at eve a ghastly red,
While over blue Bahama seas
Beckoned him ever the dead.

Till spoke, sore set at last, De Gourgues:
"Ho, brothers brave, and have ye sailed
For gain of gold this weary way?
Heaven's grace! but ye have failed!

"A sterner task our God hath set;
In yon wild land of flowers
Our dead await the trusty blades
Shall cleanse their fame and ours.

"Ye know the tale." Few words they said:
"We are thine for France to-day!"
By cape and beach and palmy isles
The avengers held their way.

The deed was done, the honor won,
Nor land nor gain of gold got they,
Where 'neath the broad palmetto leaves
Their dead at evening lay.

The deed was done, the honor won,
And o'er the gibbet-loads was set
This legend grim for priests to read,
And, if they could, forget:

"Not as to Spaniards: murderers these:
Ladrones, robbers, hanged I here,
Ransom base for the costly souls
Whom God and France hold dear."

How welcomed him that brave Rochelle,
With cannon thunder and clash of bell,
What bitter fate his courage won,
Some slender annals tell.

No legend tells what signal sweet
  Looked gladness from a woman's eyes,
Or how she welcomed him who brought
  Alas! one only prize,—

A noble deed in honor done
  And the wreck of a ruined life.
Ah, well if I knew what said the lips
  Of the little Gascon wife!

1890.

THE WRECK OF THE EMMELINE

This tack might fetch Absecom bar,
  The wind lies fair for the Dancin' Jane;
She 's good on a wind. If we keep this way,
  You might talk with folk in the land of Spain.

A tidy smack of a breeze it be;
  Just hear it whistle 'mong them dunes!
It ain't no more nor a gal for strong,—
  Sakes! but it hollers a lot of toones.

Ye 'd ought to hear it October-time
  A-fiddlin' 'mong them cat-tails tall;
Our Bill can fiddle, but 'gainst that wind
  He ain't no kind of a show at all.

Respectin' the wrack you want to see,
  It 's yon away, set hard and fast
On the outer bar. When tides is low
  You kin see a mawsel of rib and mast.

Four there was on us, wrackers all,
Born and bred to foller the sea,
And Dad beside; that 's him you seed
Las' night a-mendin' them nets with me.

Waal, sir, it was n't no night for talk;
The pipes went out, an' we stood, we four,
A-starin' dumb through the rattlin' panes,
And says Tom, "I 'd as lief be here ashore."

The wust wind ever I knowed
Was swoopin' across the deep,
An' the waves was humpin' as white as snow,
An' gallopin' in like frighted sheep.

Lord! sich a wind! It tuk that sand
An' flung it squar' on the winder-sash,
An' howled and mumbled 'mong the scrub,
An' yelled like a hurt thing 'cross the ma'sh.

Old Dad as was sittin' side the fire,
Jus' now an' agin he riz his head,
An' says he, "God help all folks at sea,—
God help 'em livin', and bury 'em dead.

"God help them in smacks as sail,
An' men as v'yage in cruisers tall;
God help all as goes by water,
Big ship and little,— help 'em all."

"Amen!" says Bill, jus' like it was church;
An' all of a sudden says Joe to me,
"Hallo!" an' thar was a flash of light,
An' the roar of a gun away to sea.

"An' it 's each for all!" cries Dad to me;
"The night ain't much of a choice for sweet."
So up he jumps an' stamps aroun',
Jus' for to waken his sleepy feet.

"An' it 's into ilers and on with boots,"
Sings Dad; "thar be n't no time to spar'.
Pull in y'r waist-straps. Hurry a bit;
The shortest time 'll be long out thar."

I did n't like it, or them no more,
But roun' we scuttles for oar and ropes,
An' out we plunged in the old man's wake,
For we knowed as we was thar only hopes.

The door druv' in; the cinders flew;
The house, it shook; out went the light;
The air was thick with squandered sand,
As nipt like the sting of a bluefly bite.

We passed yon belt of holly and pine,
An' in among them cedar an' oak
We stood a bit on the upper shore,
An stared an' listened, but no man spoke.

"Whar lies she, Bill?" roars Dad to me,
As down we bended. Then bruk' a roar
As follered a lane of dancin' light
That flashed and fluttered along the shore.

"She 's thar," says Joe; "I 'd sight of her then;
She 's hard and high on the outer bar.
Nary a light, and fast enough,
And nary a mawsel of mast or spar."

Groans Dad, "Good Lord, it 's got to be!"
Says Tom, "It ain't to be done, I fear."
Shouts Joe, a-laffin' (he allus laffed),
"It ain't to be done by standin' here."

Waal, in she went, third time of tryin'—
"In with a will," laffs Joe, in a roar,
Tom a-cussin' and Dad a-prayin',
But spry enough with the steerin' oar.

Five hours — an' cold. I was clean played out.
"Give way," shouts Dad, "give way thar now!"
"Hurray!" laffs Joe. An' we slung her along,
With a prayer to aft an' a laff in the bow.

There was five men glad when we swep' her in
Under the lee, an' none too soon.
"Aboard thar, mates!" shouts Dad, an' the wind
Just howled like a dog at full of moon.

"Up with you, Bill!" sung Dad. So I —
I grabbed for a broken rope as hung.
Gosh! it was stiff as an anchor-stock,
But up I swarmed, and over I swung.

Ice? She was ice from stem to starn.
I gripped the rail an' sarched the wrack,
An' cleared my eyes, an' sarched agin'
For livin' sign on that slidin' deck.

Four dead men in the scuppers lay.
Stiff as steel, they was froze that fast;
An' one old man was hangin' awry,
Tied to the stump of the broken mast.

Ice-bound he were. But he kinder smiled,
A-lookin' up. I was sort of skeered.
Lord! thinks I, thar was many a prayer
Froze in the snow of that orful beard.

Thar was one man lashed to the wheel,
An' his eyes was a-starin' wild,
An' thar, close-snuggled up in his arms,—
O Lord, sir, the pity! — a little child.

"Dead all," says I, as I lep to the boat.
"Give way," an' we bent to the springin' oar;
An' never no word says boy or Dad,
Till we crashed full high on the upper shore.

Then Dad, he dropped for to pray,
But I stood all a-shake on the sand;
An' the old man says, "I could wish them souls
Was fetched ashore to the joyful land."

But Joe, he laffs. Says Dad, right mad,
"Shut up. Ye 'd grin if ye went to heaven."
"Why not?" says Joe. "As for this here earth,
It takes lots of laffin' to keep things even."

Ready about, an' mind for the boom;
Ef ye keer for to hold that far,
You may see the Emmeline, keel and rib,
Stuck fast an' firm on the outer bar.

NEWPORT, *October* 1891.

A PSALM OF THE WATERS

Lo! this is a psalm of the waters,—
The wavering, wandering waters:
With languages learned in the forest,
With secrets of earth's lonely caverns,
The mystical waters go by me
On errands of love and of beauty,
On embassies friendly and gentle,
With shimmer of brown and of silver.
In pools of dark quiet they ponder,
Where the birch, and the elm, and the maple
Are dreams in the soul of their stillness.
In eddying spirals they loiter,
For touch of the fern-plumes they linger,
Caress the red mesh of the pine-roots,
And quench the strong thirst of the leafage
That high overhead with its shadows
Requites the soft touch of their giving
Like him whose supreme benediction
Make glad for love's service instinctive
The heart of the Syrian woman.
O company, stately and gracious,
That wait the sad axe on the hillside!
My kinsmen since far in the ages,
We tossed, you and I, as dull atoms,
The sport of the wind and the water.
We are as a greater has made us,
You less and I more; yet forever
The less is the giver, and thankful,
The guest of your quivering shadows,

I welcome the counselling voices
That haunt the dim aisles of the forest.

Lo, this is a psalm of the waters
That wake in us yearnings prophetic,
That cry in the wilderness lonely
With meanings for none but the tender.
I hear in the rapids below me
Gay voices of little ones playing,
And echoes of boisterous laughter
From grim walls of resonant granite.
'T is gone — it is here — this wild music!
Untamed by the ages, as gladsome
As when, from the hands of their Maker,
In wild unrestraint the swift waters
Leapt forth to the bountiful making
Of brook and of river and ocean.
I linger, I wonder, I listen.
Alas! is it I who interpret
The cry of the masterful north wind,
The hum of the rain in the hemlock,
As chorals of joy or of sadness,
To match the mere moods of my being?
Alas for the doubt and the wonder!
Alas for the strange incompleteness
That limits with boundaries solemn
The questioning soul! Yet forever
I know that these choristers ancient
Have touch of my heart; and alas, too,
That never was love in its fulness
Told all the great soul of its loving!
I know, too, the years, that remorseless
Have hurt me with sorrow, bring ever

More near for my help the quick-healing,
The infinite comfort of nature;
For surely the childhood that enters
This heaven of wood and of water
Is won with gray hairs, in the nearing
That home ever open to childhood.

And you, you my brothers, who suffer
In serfdom of labor and sorrow,
What gain have your wounds, that forever
Man bridges with semblance of knowledge
The depths he can never illumine?
Or binds for his service the lightning,
Or prisons the steam of the waters?
What help has it brought to the weeper?
How lessened the toil of the weary?
Alas! since at evening, deserted,
Job sat in his desolate anguish,
The world has grown wise; but the mourner
Still weeps and will weep; and what helping
He hath from his God or his fellow
Eludes the grave sentinel reason,
Steals in at the heart's lowly portal,
And helps, but will never be questioned.
Yea, then, let us take what these give us,
And ask not to know why the murmur
Of winds in the pine-tree has power
To comfort the hurt of life's battle,
To help when our dearest are helpless.
Lo, here stands the mother. She speaketh
As when at his tent door the Arab
Calls, Welcome! in language we know not.
Cries, Enter, and share with thy servant!

1890.

EVENING, AFTER A STORM ON THE RISTIGOUCHE RIVER

A MOOD

THE air is cool; a mist hangs low
Above the wild waves' gleaming flow,
An earth-born cloud, a prisoner fair
Held captive from the upper air.
Its life is brief; 't is gone, unseen
As souls set free. The blue serene
Shall claim it, as, of heaven's race,
It speeds a viewless way through space.
As souls set free! Oh, memories fair
That substance of my boyhood were;
What subtle process of the brain
Called that dear company again:
Those honest eyes of tranquil gray,
That heart which knew but honor's way,
And one, the strong, the saint of pain,—
That visage smiles for me again,
Laughs as it laughed when life was here,
Smiles as it smiled when death was near.
What thought-linked sweetness of the hour
Bade memory's folded buds to flower?
The dim horizons of the mind
In vain I search, nor answer find.
The sombre woods make no reply;
The busy river, rambling by,
Is silent; silent is the sky.
And yet to-day this nature dear
Than human help seems far more near;

And closer to my listening soul
The rhythms of the rapid roll
Than any words of human tongue,
Than any song of poet sung.
Alas, the bounding walls of time
Still hem us in; the poet's rhyme,
The brain, the air, the river's flow,
The frank blue sky, the waves below,
Refuse to tell us half they know.
In vain our search, in vain our cries,
Our dearest loves lack some replies;
And thought as infinite as space
May never tell us face to face,
Though sought beneath death's awful shroud,
The secrets of one flitting cloud,
All of a monad's story brief,
The history of a single leaf.
Ah, mystery of mysteries,
To know if under other skies
Shall Nature wait with open hand,
To hold her secrets at command.

O'er other hills and far away
The red scourge of the lightning flies;
The thunder roar of smitten clouds
Reverberant in distance dies;
The western sky, an arch of green,
Fades o'er me, and my still canoe
Floats on a mystic sea of gold
Flecked thick with waves of sapphire blue;
The silent counsels of the night
Float downward with the failing light;

Strange whispers from the darkened stream
Rise like the voices of a dream;
The joy of mystery gathers near,
The joy that is almost a fear.
Speechless the infinite of space,
Star-peopled, looks upon my face,
The patience of heaven's planet gaze,
That bids me wait for death's amaze,
Or for the death of deaths to tell
The secrets Nature guards so well.
Lo, darkness that is substance falls
Between the mountain's nearing walls,
The sky drops down, and to my eye
The watery levels closer lie,
Till wood and wave and mountain fade
'Neath the dear mother's cloak of shade.
She brings for me the scented balm
Her spruce-trees yield; a sacred calm
Falls softly on my kneeling heart.
"Peace, child," she whispers, "mine thou art.
Lo, in my darkness thou hast found
Content my daylight does not bound;
My silence to thy soul doth preach;
Night unto night still uttereth speech,
And the black night of death shall be
As eloquent of truth to thee."

1886.

RAIN IN CAMP

The camp-fire smoulders and will not burn,
And a sulky smoke from the blackened logs
Lazily swirls through the dank wood caves;
And the laden leaves with a quick relief
Let fall their loads, as the pool beyond
Leaps 'neath the thin gray lash of the rain,
And is builded thick with silver bells.
But I lie on my back in vague despair,
Trying it over thrice and again,
To see if my words will say the thing.
But the sodden moss, and the wet black wood,
And the shining curves of the dancing leaves,
The drip and drop, and tumble and patter,
The humming roar in the sturdy pines,
Alas, shall there no man paint or tell.

1870.

ELK COUNTY

From lands of the elk and the pine-tree,
Of hemlock and whitewood and maple,
You ask me to write you a lyric
Shall thrill with the cries of the forest,
And flow like the sap of the maple,—
The rich yellow blood of the maple,
That hath such a wild, lusty sweetness,
Such a taste of the wilderness in it.
And surely 't were pleasant to summon

The days which so lately have vanished,
The friends who were part of their pleasure.
Right cheery for me, in the city,
To think once again of the sunsets
We watched from the crest of the hilltop,
Alone on the stumps in the clearing;
When slowly the forms of the mountains,
Our own hills, our loved Alleghanies,
Grew hazy and distant and solemn,
Cloaked each with the shade of his neighbor;
Like rigid old Puritans scorning
The passion and riot of color,
Of yellow and purple and scarlet,
Which haunt the gay court of the sunset,
Where Eve, like a wild Cinderella,
Awaits the gray fairy of twilight.
Sweet, ever, to think of the forests,
Their cool, woody fragrance delicious;
To think of the camp-fires we builded
To baffle those terrible pungies;
To think how we wandered, bewildered
With wood-dreams and delicate fancies
Unknown to the life of the city.
To tread but those cushioning mosses;
To lie, almost float, on the fern-beds;
To feel the crisp crush of the foot on
The mouldering logs of the windfall,
Were things to be held in remembrance.
Dost recall how we lingered to listen
The sound of the wood-robin's bugle,
Or bent the witch-hopple to guide us,
As one folds the page he is reading,
And felt, as we peered through the stillness,

Through armies and legions of tree-trunks,
Such solemn and brooding sensations
As told of the birth of religions,
As whispered how men grow to Druids
When the fly-wheel of work is arrested,
And they live the still life of the forest?
Ay, here in the face of the woodman,
You see how the woods have been preaching,
As he leans on the logs of his cabin
To watch the prim city-folk coming
O'er the chips, and the twigs, and the stubble,
Through the fire-scarred stumps, and the hemlocks
His axe hath so ruthlessly girdled.
Ay, he too has learned in the forest,
One half of him Nimrod and slayer,
Unsparing, enduring, and tireless,
In wait for the deer at the salt-lick;
Yet one stronger half of his nature —
This rough and bold out-of-door nature,
Hath touches of sadness upon it,
And is grown to the ways of the forest,
Till wildness and softness together
Are one in the sap of his being.

Right pleasant it were, friend and lady,
To tell you some tale of the woodland;
To hear the faint voice of tradition,
Of childish and simple conceptions,
And find in their half-spoken meanings
Some thought all the nations have muttered
In the parable tongues of their childhood.
Alas for the tale and the writer!

The land has no story to tell us,—
No voice save the Clarion's waters,
No song save the murm'rous confusion
Of winds gone astray in the pine-tops,
Or the roar of the rain on the hemlocks;—
No record, no sign, not a word of
The lords of the axe and the rifle,
Who camped by the smooth Alleghany,
And blazed the first tree on the mountain.
Yet here, even here in the forest,—
The soul-calming deep of the forest,
Where cat-birds are noisy and dauntless,
And deft little miserly squirrels
Are hoarding the beech-nuts for winter;
Where rattlesnakes charm, and the hoot-owl
By night sounds his murderous war-pipe,—
Yes, here in the last home of Nature,
Where the greenness that swells o'er the hillock
Is pink with the blossoming laurel,
The wants of the city still haunt us,
When busy blue axes are ringing,
And totter the kings of the mountain.
Ah, well you recall, I can fancy,
The morn we looked down on the valley
That bears the proud name of the battle,
Itself a fair field for the winning;
Recall, too, the frank speech which told us
Who felled the first tree in the valley
Where now the red heifers are browsing,
And reapers are swinging their cradles,
And fat grow the stacks with the harvest.
Canst see, too, the dam and the mill-pond,
The trees in the dark amber water,

Where thousands of pine logs are tethered,
With maple and black birch and cherry?
Canst hear, as I hear, the gay hum of
The bright, whizzing saw in the steam-mill,
Its up-and-down old-fashioned neighbor
Singing, "Go it!" and "Go it!" and "Go it!"
As it whirrs through the heart of the pine-tree,
And spouts out the saw-dust, and filleth
The air with its resinous odors?
Ay, gnaw at them morning and evening,
Thou hungry old dog of a sawmill!
The planks thou art shaping so deftly
Shall ring with the tramp of the raftsmen,
Shall drift on the shallow Ohio,
Shall build thy fair homes, Cincinnati,
Shall see the gay steamers go by them,
Shall float on the broad Mississippi,
Shall floor the rough cabins of Kansas.

And here is a tale for the poet,—
A story of Saxon endurance,
A story of work and completion,
A legend of rough-handed labor
As wild as the runes of the fiords.

1858.

A CAMP IN THREE LIGHTS

Against the darkness sharply lined
Our still white tents gleamed overhead,
And dancing cones of shadow cast
When sudden flashed the camp-fire red,

Where fragrant hummed the moist swamp-spruce,
And tongues unknown the cedar spoke,
While half a century's silent growth
Went up in cheery flame and smoke.

Pile on the logs! A flickering spire
Of ruby flame the birch-bark gives,
And as we track its leaping sparks,
Behold in heaven the North-light lives!

An arch of deep, supremest blue,
A band above of silver shade,
Where, like the frost-work's crystal spears,
A thousand lances grow and fade,

Or shiver, touched with palest tints
Of pink and blue, and changing die,
Or toss in one triumphant blaze
Their golden banners up the sky,

With faint, quick, silken murmurings,
A noise as of an angel's flight,
Heard like the whispers of a dream
Across the cool, clear Northern night.

Our pipes are out, the camp-fire fades,
The wild auroral ghost-lights die,
And stealing up the distant wood
The moon's white spectre floats on high,

And, lingering, sets in awful light
A blackened pine-tree's ghastly cross,
Then swiftly pays in silver white
The faded fire, the aurora's loss.

1870.

LAKE NIPIGON

High-shouldered and ruddy and sturdy,
Like droves of pre-Adamite monsters,
The vast mounded rocks of red basalt
Lie basking round Nipigon's waters;
And still lies the lake, as if fearing
To trouble their centuried slumber;
And heavy o'er lake and in heaven
A dim veil of smoke tells of forests
Ablaze in the far lonely Northland:
And over us, blood-red and sullen,
The sun shines on gray-shrouded islands,
And under us, blood-red and sullen
The sun in the dark umber water
Looks up at the gray, murky heaven,
While one lonely loon on the water
Is wailing his mate, and beside us
Two shaggy-haired Chippewa children
In silence watch sadly the white man.

1871.

EVENING STORM — NIPIGON

Upon the beach, with low, quick, mournful sob,
The weary waters shudder to our feet;
And far beyond the sunset's golden light,
Forever brighter in its lessening span,
Shares not the sadness of yon dark wood-wall,

Where green and noiseless deeps of shadow rest
In growing gloom 'twixt golden lake and sky.
Fast fades the lessening day, and far beneath
The tamarack shivers and the cedar's cone
Uneasy sways, while fitful tremors stir
The tattered livery of the ragged birch;
And over all the arch of heaven is wild
With tumbled clouds, where swift the lightning's lance
Gleams ruby red and thunder-echoes roll;
Far, far below — sweet as the dream of hope
What time despair is nearest — lies the lake.
Fast comes the storm; spiked black with pattering rain,
The darkened water gleams with bells of foam.
Fast comes the storm, till over lake and sky,
O'er yellow lake and ever-yellowing sky,
Cruel and cold, the gray storm-twilights rest;
And so the day before its time is dead.

1870.

NOONDAY WOODS — NIPIGON

Between thin fingers of the pine
The fluid gold of sunlight slips,
And through the tamarack's gray-green fringe
Upon the level birch leaves drips.

Through all the still, moist forest air
Slow trickles down the soft, warm sheen,
And flecks the branching wood of ferns
With tender tints of pallid green,

To rest where close to mouldered trunks
The red and purple berries lie,
Where tiny jungles of the moss
Their tropic forests rear on high.

Fast, fast asleep the woodland rests,
Stirs not the tamarack's topmost sheaf,
And slow the subtle sunlight glides
With noiseless step from leaf to leaf.

And lo, he comes! the fairy prince,
The heir of richer, softer strands:
A summer guest of sterner climes,
He moves across the vassal lands.

And lo, he comes! the fairy prince,
The joyous sweet southwestern breeze:
He bounds across the dreaming lake,
And bends to kiss the startled trees,

Till all the woodland wakes to life,
The pheasant chirps, the chipmunks cry,
And scattered flakes of golden light
Athwart the dark wood-spaces fly.

Ah, but a moment, and away!
The fair, false prince has kissed and fled:
No more the wood shall feel his touch,
No more shall know his joyous tread.

1872.

AFTER SUNSET — LAKE WEELOKENE-BAKOK

At twilight Azescohos standeth
With domes that are builded of color:
Its deep-wrinkled strata and boulders,
Its sombre-leaved greenness of noonday,
Fade, lost in the blue misty splendor
That seems like the soul of a color;
While far, far away to the eastward
One vast fading glory of scarlet —
A color that seems as if living —
Possesses the sky like a passion,
And higher and higher in heaven
Fades out in the soft bluish greenness
That climbs to the zenith above us.
Below, far below, as if thinking,
At rest lies the sensitive lake; and
Like one who sings but to her own heart
Such thoughts as a loving lip whispers,
Thus deep in the waters are pictured
The beauty of sunset and hillside.
For the blue that was blue on the mountain,
Seen deep in the heart of the water,
Hath the touch of some blessing upon it,—
Some strangeness of purity in it,
Like color that shall be in heaven.
This water-held vision of sunset,
Ablaze in the depths of the darkness,
Is it but for the sight? Canst not hear it,
This prophet of color, to tell us

Of what may be yet, when the senses
Awaken to lordlier being,
And the thought of the blind man is ours:
When colors unearthly men know not
Shall float from the trumpets of angels,
And tints of the glory of heaven
Shall be for us color and music?

1871.

THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

How gentle here is Nature's mood! She lays
A woman-hand upon the troubled heart,
Bidding the world away and time depart,
While the brief minutes swoon to endless days
Filled full of sad, inconstant thoughtfulness.

Behold 't is eventide. Dun cattle stand
Drowsed in the misted grasses. From the hollows deep,
Dim veils, adrift, o'er arch and tower sweep,
Casting a dreary doubt along the land,
Weighting the twilight with some vague distress.

Transient and subtle, not to thought more near
Than spirit is to flesh, about me rise
Dim memories, long lost to love's sad eyes;
Now are they wandering shadows, strange and drear,
That from their natal substance far have strayed.

The witches of the mind possess the time,
And cry, "Behold thy dead!" They come, they pass;

We yearn to give them feature, face. Alas!
Love hath no morn for memory's failing prime;
What once was sweet with truth is but a shade.

The ghosts of nameless sorrow, joy, despair,
Emotions that have no remembered source,
Love-waifs from other worlds, hope, fear, remorse
Born of some vision's crime, wail through the air,
Crying, We were and are not!— that is all.

Yet sweet the indecisive evening hour
That hath of earth the least. Unreal as dreams
Dreamed within dreams, and ever further, seems
The sound of human toil, while grass and flower
Bend where the mercy of the dew doth fall.

Strange mysteries of expectation wait
Above the grave-mounds of the storied space,
Where, buried, lie a nation's strength and grace,
And the sad joys of Rome's imperious state
That perished of its insolent excess.

A dull, gray shroud o'er this vast burial rests,
Is deathly still, or seems to rise and fall,
As on a dear one, dead, the moveless pall
Doth cheat the heart with stir of her white breasts,
Mocking the troubled hour with worse distress.

A deathful languor holds the twilight mist,
Unearthly colors drape the Alban hills,
A dull malaria the spirit fills;
Death and decay all beauty here have kissed,
Pledging the land to sorrowing loveliness.

Rome, *May* 1891.

THE GRAVE OF KEATS

THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY AT ROME

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Fair little city of the pilgrim dead,
Dear are thy marble streets, thy rosy lanes:
Easy it seems and natural here to die,
And death a mother, who with tender care
Doth lay to sleep her ailing little ones.
Old are these graves, and they who, mournfully,
Saw dust to dust return, themselves are mourned;
Yet, in green cloisters of the cypress shade,
Full-choired chants the fearless nightingale
Ancestral songs learned when the world was young.
Sing on, sing ever in thy breezy homes;
Toss earthward from the white acacia bloom
The mingled joy of fragrance and of song;
Sing in the pure security of bliss.
These dead concern thee not, nor thee the fear
That is the shadow of our earthly loves.
And me thou canst not comfort; tender hearts
Inherit here the anguish of the doubt
Writ on this gravestone. He, at last, I trust,
Serenity of sure attainment knows.
The night falls, and the darkened verdure starred
With pallid roses shuts the world away.
Sad wandering souls of song, frail ghosts of thought
That voiceless died, the massing shadows haunt,
Troubling the heart with unfulfilled delight.
The moon is listening in the vault of heaven,

And, like the airy march of mighty wings,
The rhythmic throb of stately cadences
Inthralls the ear with some high-measured verse,
Where ecstasies of passion-nurtured words
For great thoughts find a home, and fill the mind
With echoes of divinely purposed hopes
That wore on earth the death-pall of despair.
Night darkens round me. Never more in life
May I, companioned by the friendly dead,
Walk in this sacred fellowship again;
Therefore, thou silent singer 'neath the grass,
Still sing to me those sweeter songs unsung,
" Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone,"
Caressing thought with wonderments of phrase
Such as thy springtide rapture knew to win.
Ay, sing to me thine unborn summer songs,
And the ripe autumn lays that might have been;
Strong wine of fruit mature, whose flowers alone we know.

Rome, *May* 1891.

ROMA

Ripe hours there be that do anticipate
The heritage of death, and bid us see,
As from the vantage of eternity,
The shadow-symbols of historic fate.

As o'er some Alpine summit's lonely steep,
Blinding and terrible with spears of light,
Hurling the snows from many a shaken height,
The storm-clad spirits of the mountain sweep,—

Thus, in the solitude where broodeth thought,
Torn from rent chasms of the soundless past,
Go by me, as if borne upon the blast,
The awful forms which time and man have wrought.

Swift through the gloom each mournful chariot rolls,
Dim shapes of empire urge the flying steeds,
Featured with man's irrevocable deeds,
Robed with the changeful passions of men's souls.

Ethereal visions pass serene in prayer,
Their eyes aglow with sacrificial light;
Phantoms of creeds long dead, their garments bright,
Drip red with blood of torture and despair.

In such an hour my spirit did behold
A woman wonderful. Unnumbered years
Left in her eyes the beauty born of tears,
And full they were of fatal stories old.

The trophies of her immemorial reign
The shadowy great of eld beside her bore;
A broidery of ancient song she wore,
And the glad muses held her regal train.

Still hath she kingdom o'er the souls of men;
Dear is she always in her less estate.
The sad, the gay, the thoughtful, on her wait,
Praising her evermore with tongue and pen.

Stately her ways and sweet, and all her own;
As one who has forgotten time, she lives,

Loves, loses, lures anew, and ever gives,—
She who all misery and all joy hath known.

If thou wouldst see her, as the twilight fails,
Go forth along the ancient street of tombs,
And when the purple shade divinely glooms
High o'er the Alban hills, and night prevails,

If then she is not with thee while the light
Glows over roof and column, tower and dome,
And the dead stir beneath thy feet, and Rome
Lies in the solemn keeping of the night,—

If then she be not thine, not thine the lot
Of those some angel rescues for an hour
From earth's mean limitations, granting power
To see as man may see when time is not.

Rome, *May* 1891.

VENICE

I am Venezia, that Sad Magdalen,
Who with her lovers' arms the turbaned East
Smote, and through lusty centuries of gain
Lived a wild queen of battle and of feast.
I netted, in gold meshes of my hair,
The great of soul; painter and poet, priest,
Bent at my will with picture, song, and prayer,
And ever love of me their fame increased,
Till I, queen, became the slave of slaves,
And, like the ghost-kings of the Umbrian plain,
Saw from my centuries torn, as from their graves,

The priceless jewels of my haughty reign.
Gone are my days of gladness; now in vain
I hurt the tender with my speechless pain.

VENICE, *June* 1891.

VENICE TO ITALY

O ITALY, my fateful mistress-land,
That, like Delilah, won with deathful bliss
Each conquering foe who wooed thy wanton kiss,
And sheared thy lovers' strength with certain hand,
And gave them to Philistia's bonds of vice;
Smiling to see the strong limbs waste away,
The manly vigor crippled by decay,
Usurious years exact the minute's price.
Ah! when *my* great were greatest, ever glad,
I thanked them with the hope of nobler deeds.
Statesman and poet, painter, sculptor, knight,—
These my dear lovers were ere days grew sad,
And them I taught how mightily exceeds
All other love the love that holds God's light.

VENICE, *June* 1891.

THE DECAY OF VENICE

THE glowing pageant of my story lies,
A shaft of light, across the stormy years,
When, 'mid the agony of blood and tears,
Or pope or kaiser won the mournful prize,

Till I, the fearless child of ocean, heard
The step of doom, and trembling to my fall,
Remorseful knew that I had seen unstirred
Proud Freedom's death, the tyrant's festival;
Whilst that Italia which was yet to be,
And is, and shall be, sat, a virgin pure,
High over Umbria on the mountain slopes,
And saw the failing fires of liberty
Fade on the chosen shrine she deemed secure,
When died for many a year man's noblest hopes.

VENICE, *June* 1891.

PISA: THE DUOMO

Lo, this is like a song writ long ago,
Born of the easy strength of simpler days,
Filled with the life of man, his joy, his praise,
Marriage and childhood, love, and sin, and woe,
Defeat and victory, and all men know
Of passionate remorses, and the stays
That help the weary on life's rugged ways.
A dreaming seraph felt this beauty grow
In sleep's pure hour, and with joy grown bold
Set the fair crystal in the thought of man;
And Time, with antique tints of ivory wan,
And gentle industries of rain and light,
Its stones rejoiced, and o'er them crumbled gold
Won from the boundaries of day and night.

PISA, *May* 1891.

THE VESTAL'S DREAM

Ah, Venus, white-limbed mother of delight,
Why shouldst thou tease her with a dream so dear?
Winged tenderness of kisses, hovering near,
Her gentle longings cheat. Forbidden sight
Of eager eyes doth through the virgin night
Perplex her innocence with cherished fear.
O cruel thou, with sweets to ripen here
In wintry cloisters what can know but blight.
Wilt leave her now to scorn? The lictors' blows
To-morrow shall be merciless. The light
Dies on the altar! Nay, swift through the night,
Comes pitiful the queen of young desire,
That reddened in a dream this chaste white rose,
And lights with silver torch the fallen fire.

Rome, *May* 1891.

AFTER RUYSDAEL

Through briery ways, from underneath
The far-off sadness of the gold
That fades above the sun, the waves
Swift to our very feet are rolled.

Above, beyond, to either side,
The sombre woods bend overhead;
And underneath, the wild brown waves
Leap joyously, with lightsome tread,

From rock to rock, and laugh and sing,
Like lonely maids in woods at play;
Till in the cold, still pool below,
A-sudden checked, they stand at bay,

Like girls who, in their mood of joy,
To this more solemn woodland glide,
And with some brief, sweet terror touched,
Stand wistful, trembling, tender-eyed.

What half-felt sense of something gone,
What sadness in the moveless woods;
What sorrow haunts yon amber sky,
That over all so darkly brood!

AFTER ALBERT CUYP

A SUNSET silence holds the patient land;
Against the sun the stolid cattle stand;
Framed hazy, in the gold that slips
Between the sails of lazy ships,
And floods with level, yellow light
The broad, green meadow grasses bright.

NEAR AMSTERDAM

AFTER ALBERT CUYP

Sober gray skies and ponderous clouds,
With gaps between of pallid blues;
Bluff breezes stirring the brown canal;
A broad, flat meadow's myriad hues

Of soft and changeful breadths of green,
Barred with the silvery grass that bows
By straight canals, and dotted o'er
With black and white of basking cows;

And distant sails of hidden ships
The ceaseless windmills show or hide,
Through languid willows white they gleam,
And over red-tiled houses glide.

Two sturdy lads with wooden shoes
Go clumping down the reed-fringed dyke,
And tow a broad-bowed boat, where dreams
The quaint, sweet virgin of Van Eyck.

And slipt from out the revel high,
Where gay Franz Hals has bid him sit,
Above the bridge, his lazy pipe
Smokes placidly the stout De Witt.

AFTER TENIERS

A QUIET curve of sombre brown water,
  Flecked with duck-weed and dotted with leaves;
A low brick cottage, where shadows nestle
  'Neath velvet edges of well-thatched eaves.

In front a space, with its gaudy dahlias
  And solid shade of the branching lime,
Where, soberly gay, two boors are drinking
  In the deep'ning gloom of the evening time.

1870.

MILAN

DA VINCI'S CHRIST

ALL day long, year after year,
  Maid and man and priest and lay
Wander in from crowded streets,
  And through the long, cool gallery stray.

And with them, in the fading light,
  We loiter past the pictured wall,
Till lo! a face before us comes,
  And something wistful seems to fall

From two strange eyes that speak to all;
  For here a priest, and there a maid,
Two lads, a soldier, and a *bonne,*
  Before the rail their steps have stayed.

What message bore this awful face,
  Through all the waning centuries fled?
What says it to the gazer now?
  What said it to the myriad dead

Who came and went like us to-day,
  And, pausing here in silence, all
In silence laid their weight of sins
  Before this still confessional?

A face more sad man never dreamed,
  A face more sweet man never wrought;
So solemn-sad, so solemn-sweet,
  Serenely set in quiet thought.

The silent sunlight slips away,
  The soldiers pass, the *bonne* goes by;
The painter drapes his copy in,
  And stops his work and heaves a sigh.

And followed by those eyes, that have
  The patience of eternity,
We carry to the bustling street
  Their loving *Benedicite*.

1870.

BRUGES: QUAI DES AUGUSTINS

AFTER VAN DER VEER

Within the sad, deserted street,
We stand a little space to gaze,
Beneath the high-walled garden's shade,
Amid the twilight's growing haze.

The still depths of the dark canal,
Between gray walls of ancient stone,
Stir not to any wind that blows,
And seem so silent, so alone,

We wonder at the lazy swans
That o'er the water dare to glide,
And marvel at the lads who cast
Their pebbles from the bridge's side.

Quaint houses bound the darksome wave,
Time-tinted, yellow, umber, gray,
With gaping gargoyles overhead,
And underneath sweet gardens gay,

With ivy, flung like cloaks of green
Upon the worn and mottled wall;
Forgotten centuries ago
By burgher dames at even-fall.

Across the narrow space of flowers,
A maid in scarlet petticoat
Comes with the shining pail of brass,
And bends above the moveless moat;

And breaks her image with the pail,
  And scares the swans, and trips away,
And leaves the stern, gray, sombre street
  To silence and the waning day.

1870.

THE WAVES AT MIDNIGHT

THE CLIFFS, NEWPORT

SEEN in the night by
Their snows, as they crush,
Evermore saying —
Hush — hush — hush —
They fall, and they die,
Break, and perish, without reply.

And are not and are,
And come back again
With the sob and throb
Of a constant pain,
And snatch from afar
The tremulous light of a single star.

Always the cliffs hear,
How mournfully sweet
Their murmurous music,
Their cry of defeat,
As near and more near
They shiver and die in darkness drear.

Bleaker the cliffs be,
And blacker the night,
Where tender with sorrow,
Where eager for light,
The waves of life's sea
Wail, crushed at an answerless cliff-wall
for me.

1889.

THE RISING TIDE

An idle man, I stroll at eve,
Where move the waters to and fro;
Full soon their added gains will leave
Small space for me to come and go.

Already in the clogging sand
I walk with dull, retarded feet;
Yet still is sweet the lessening strand,
And still the lessening light is sweet.

Newport, *October* 1891.

EVENING BY THE SEA

With noble waste of lazy hours
I loitered, till I saw the moon,
A rosy pearl, hang vast and strange
Above the long gray dune!

And hither, thither, as I went,
My ancient friend the sea beside,
Whatever tune my spirit sang
The dear old comrade tried.

Bar Harbor, 1892.

BEAVER-TAIL ROCKS

CANONICUT

Fare forth my soul, fare forth, and take thine own;
The silver morning and the golden eve
Wait, as the virgins waited to receive
The bridegroom and the bride, with roses strown;
Fare forth and lift her veil,— the bride is joy alone!
To thee the friendly hours with her shall bring
The changeless trust that bird and poet sing;
Her dower to-day shall be the asters sown
On breezy uplands; hers the vigor brought
Upon the north wind's wing, and hers for thee
A stately heritage of land and sea,
And all that nature hath, and all the great have thought,
While low she whispers like a sea-born shell
Things that thy love may hear but never tell.

1889.

THE CARRY

NIPIGON

BLUE is the sky overhead,
Blue with the northland's pallor,
Never a cloud in sight,
Naught but the moon's gray sickle;
And ever around me, gray,
Ashes, and rock, and lichen.
Far as the sick eye searches
Ghastly trunks, that were trees once,
Up to their bony branches
Carry the gray of ruin.
Lo! where across the mountain
Swept the scythe of the wind-fall,
Moss of a century's making
Lies on this death-swath lonely,
Where in grim heaps the wood sachems,
Like to the strange dead of battle,
Stay, with their limbs ever rigid
Set in the doom-hour of anguish.
Far and away o'er this waste land
Wanders a trail through gray boulders,
Brown to the distant horizon.

1870.

IDLENESS

THERE is no dearer lover of lost hours
Than I.
I can be idler than the idlest flowers;
More idly lie
Than noonday lilies languidly afloat,
And water pillowed in a windless moat.
And I can be
Stiller than some gray stone
That hath no motion known.
It seems to me
That my still idleness doth make my own
All magic gifts of joy's simplicity.

RISTIGOUCHE RIVER, 1892.

THE LOST PHILOPENA

TO M. G. M.

MORE blest is he who gives than who receives,
For he that gives doth always something get:
Angelic usurers that interest set:
And what we give is like the cloak of leaves
Which to the beggared earth the great trees fling,
Thoughtless of gain in chilly autumn days:
The mystic husbandry of nature's ways
Shall fetch it back in greenery of the Spring.
One tender gift there is, my little maid,
That doth the giver and receiver bless,

And shall with obligation none distress;
Coin of the heart in God's just balance weighed;
Wherefore, sweet spendthrift, still be prodigal,
And freely squander what thou hast from all.

LUCERNE, *July* 1891.

GOOD-NIGHT

GOOD-NIGHT. Good-night. Ah, good the night
That wraps thee in its silver light.
Good-night. No night is good for me
That does not hold a thought of thee.
Good-night.

Good-night. Be every night as sweet
As that which made our love complete,
Till that last night when death shall be
One brief "Good-night," for thee and me.
Good-night.

NEWPORT, 1890.

COME IN

"COME in." I stand, and know in thought
The honest kiss, the waiting word,
The love with friendship interwrought,
The face serene by welcome stirred.

BAR HARBOR, 1892.

LOSS

Life may moult many feathers, yet delight
To soar and circle in a heaven of joy;
The pinion robbed must learn more swift employ,
Till the thinned feathers end our eager flight.

Bar Harbor, 1892.

A GRAVEYARD

As beats the unrestful sea some ice-clad isle
Set in the sorrowful night of arctic seas,
Some lorn domain of endless silences,
So, echoless, unanswered, falleth here
The great voiced city's roar of fretful life.

Rome, 1891.

OCTOBER

Stay, gentle sunshine, stay;
  Sweet west wind, bide awhile;
Nay, linger, and my maid
  Shall bribe you with a smile.

Sweet sun and west wind, stay,
  You know not what you miss;
Nay, linger, and my maid
  Shall pay you with a kiss.

1890.

SEPTEMBER

Sir Goldenrod stands by and grieves
  Where Queen September goeth by:
Her viewless feet disturb the leaves,
  And with her south the thrushes fly,
Or loiter 'mid the rustling sheaves,
  And search and fail, and wonder why.
The burgher cat-tails stiffly bow
  Beside the marsh. The asters cast
Their purple coronets, and below
  The brown ferns shiver in the blast,
And all the fretted pool aglow
  Repeats the cold, clear, yellow sky.
The dear, loved summer days are past,
  And tranquil goes the Queen to die.

1889.

YOU AND I

What would you say
If you were I,
And I were near,
And no one by;
If you were I?

What would you do
If you were I,
And night were dark,
And none were nigh?
What would you do?

What would I say
If I were you,
And none were near,
And love were true?
What would I say?

What would I do?
Just only this.
And on my cheek
Soft lit a kiss.
This did she do!

I heard a cry,
And through the night
Saw far away
A gleam of white,
And there was I!

But not again
This she was I;
Yet still I loved,
And years went by.
Ah, not again!

1890.

THE CHRIST OF THE SNOWS

A NORWEGIAN LEGEND

Set wine on the table
And bread on the plate;
Cast logs on the ashes,
And reverent wait.

The wine of love's sweetness
Set out in thy breast,
And the white bread of welcome,
To comfort the Guest.

For surely He cometh,
Now midnight is near;
The wild winds, like wolf-packs,
Have fled in their fear,

Or hid in far fiords,
Or died on the floes:
For surely He cometh,
Our Christ of the Snows.

Along by the portal,
Half joy and half fear,
Wait man, maid, and matron
The step none shall hear;

The babe at the doorway,
And age with eyes dim,—
They whom birth near or death near
Make closest to Him.

The clock tolleth midnight:
Cast open the door;
Shrink back ere He passeth,
Kneel all on the floor.

The stillness of terror
Possesseth the night,
From star-haunted heaven
To snow spaces white.

Lo! shaken by ghost gods
  Who angrily fly,
The banners of Odin
  Flame red on the sky.

The last note hath stricken:
  Did He pass? Was He here?
Is it sorrow or joy that
  Shall rule the new year?

The mother who watcheth
  The face of the child
Saith, Ah, He was with us,—
  The baby hath smiled!

The virgin who bends o'er
  The cup on the board
Cries, Lo! the wine trembled,—
  'T was surely the Lord!

Sing Christmas, sweet Christmas,
  All good men below;
Sing Christmas that bringeth
  Our Christ of the Snow.

1880.

ST. CHRISTOPHER

FOR A CHILD

THERE was none so tall as this giant bold.
He had a name that could not be told,
A name so crooked no Christian men
Could say it over and speak again.
One day he came where a good man prayed
All alone in the forest shade.
Then the giant in wonder said:
"Why do you bend the knee and head?"
"I bend," he said, "because I be
The weakest thing that you can see.
To Christ who is so good and strong,
I pray for help to do no wrong."
"Ho," said the giant, "when I see
One strong enough to conquer me,
I shall be glad to bend my knees,
Which are as stout as any trees."
"But," said the good man, sad and old,
"Yon stream is deep, the water cold.
Prayer is the Spirit's work for some.
Work is the prayer of the body dumb."
"If that be prayer," said the giant tall,
"The maimed and sick, the weak and small,
Across the stream and to and fro,
I shall carry and come and go,
Until the time when I shall see
Thy strong Christ come to humble me."
So all day long, with patient hand,
He bore the weak from strand to strand.

At last, one eve, when winds were wild,
He heard the voice of a little child
Saying, "Giant, art thou asleep?
Carry me over the river deep."
On his shoulder broad he set the child,
And laughed to see how the infant smiled.
Up to his waist the giant strode,
While fierce around the water flowed;
His great back shook, his great knees bent,
As staggering through the waves he went.
"Why is this?" he cried aloud;
"Why should my great back be bowed?"
Spake from his shoulder, sweet and clear,
A voice,—'t was like a bird's to hear,—
"I am the Christ to whom men pray
When comes the morn and wanes the day."
"No," said the giant, "a child art thou.
Not to a babe shall proud men bow!"
He set the child on the farther land,
And wiped his brow with shaking hand.
"In truth," he cried, "the load was great,
Wherefore art thou this heavy weight?"
The little child said, "I was heavy to thee
Because the world's sins rest on me."
"If thou canst carry them all on thee,
Who art but a little child to see,
Thou must be strong, and I be weak,
And thou must be the one I seek."
Therefore the giant, day by day,
Still kept his work, and learned to pray.
And his pagan name that none should hear
Was changed to Giant Christopher.

1887.

LINES TO A DESERTED STUDY

Hush! Feel ye not around us teem
The shapes that haunted Goethe's dream?
When lifted genius mused apart,
And taste inspired the soul of art;
Young first Love, coy with trembling wings,
And Hope, the lark that soaring sings,
And boyhood friendships prone to fade
Through pleasant zones of sun and shade;
With many a phantom born of youth,
The trust in honor, faith, and truth
That fails in after years;
The perfect pearls of life's young dream
Dissolved in manhood's tears.
Through Time's swift loom our joys and griefs
In braided strands together run;
To weave about this world of ours
Wild tapestries of shade and sun.
And seems it not as if to-night,
Dear, dusty, many-memoried room,
Our souls had lost the threads of light,
And like the eve kept gathering gloom?
Ay, and for one of us the hour
Must have, methinks, a double power,
As backwards turns his saddened look,
To view again those many scenes,
When life was like an uncut book,
And Joy was in her rosy teens,
Yes, even we who later knew
The home of friendship and of taste,

Stand saddened by the parting view
Of scenes by recollection graced.
Ah, there the books looked meekly out
Above an alligator's snout;
And bugs and fossils, birds and bones,
Round-shouldered bottles, jars, and stones,
Stood up in order sage,—
Memorials they of every clime,
Remains of every age.
Oh, yes, 't was here at eventide
We lingered by the table's side,
While Wit her lightning stories told,
And through Havana's clouds of gold
The thunder-storm of laughter rolled,
Till Mirth her very contrast brought,
And drooped the brow in earnest thought;
While tranced we sat, as now we sit,
And fast the parting time draws near,
And these stained walls seem gathering grace
As if to grow more doubly dear;
And not an ink-mark on the boards
But wears a half-appealing look.
The mottled wall, the naked floor,
I read them as ye read a book,—
As if they something had to say,
And sought but could not find a way;
As often 'mid the waning year,
In brown-cheeked autumn's bowers,
The leaves ye tread seem rustling low,—
Tread gently, we were flowers.

AN OLD MAN TO AN OLD MADEIRA

When first you trembled at my kiss
And blushed before and after,
Your life, a rose 'twixt May and June,
Was stirred by breeze of laughter.

I asked no mortal maid to leave
A kiss where there were plenty;
Enough the fragrance of your lips
When I was five-and-twenty.

Fair mistress of a moment's joy,
We met, and then we parted;
You gave me all you had to give,
Nor were you broken-hearted!

For other lips have known your kiss,
Oh! fair inconstant lady,
While you have gone your shameless way
'Till life has passed its heyday.

And then we met in middle age,
You matronly and older;
And somewhat gone your maiden blush,
And I, well, rather colder.

And now that you are thin and pale,
And I am slowly graying,
We meet, remindful of the past,
When we two went a-maying.

Alas! while you, an old coquette,
Still flaunt your faded roses,
The arctic loneliness of age
Around my pathway closes.

Dear aged wanton of the feast,
Egeria of gay dinners,
I leave your unforgotten charm
To other younger sinners.

ADAM

A HUNGARIAN LEGEND

Far in Asia, saith the legend,
On a peak whose nameless towers
Use the plains a hundred miles off
For their dial of the hours;

Where the tallest Himalaya
Rises sad because so lonely,
Whence the eagle swoops in terror,
And the stars of God are only,—

Sitteth one of ancient visage,
One more strange than aught below him,
One who lived so near to God once
That for man we scarce should know him;—

Far above the busy world tribes,
Miles above the pine-trees, bending,
Lonely as when God first made him,
There he keepeth watch unending.

Wearily his eyes are searching
Wide and far amid the nations,
In their centuried depths a million
Pictures of earth's desolations.

And his garments long and ample
Lie as though in death he slumbered;
Never breeze hath stirred their stillness
Since his earthly days were numbered.

But their tints are ever changing,
Painted by the woes of mortals,—
Scarlet, mottled, darkened, whitened,
Like the morning's cloud of portals;

For the mists of human passion,
Anger, sorrow, love, devotion,
Rise from town, and mart, and forest,
Float from hill, and field, and ocean,

And with hate and murder's crimson
Stain and blot his mantle's brightness,
Or with love, and faith, and patience,
Bleach its folds to noonday whiteness.

Yet with solemn eyes he waiteth,
Since for sins that rack him ever
One still greater heart grows sadder
With a love that wearies never;

For above the sad earth's murmurs,
And above the pale star's gray light,
Far beyond unthought-of systems,
And the shining homes of daylight,

One there is, at whose dear coming
Peace and love his robes shall whiten,
When, his earth-long vigil ended,
Death his troubled face shall brighten.

TO THE FORGET-ME-NOTS

ON THE PASS OF THE MAIDEN, JAPAN

Lo! Fujiyama's snowy cone
The green horizon bounds,
And Miajimi's sacred isle,
And Budda's temple-grounds.

Ah, once again thy voice is heard;
Again we keep our tryst,
As when upon the Switzer's hill
I stood amid the mist.

Within the garden's ordered walks
Thy name alone I hear,
And miss the gentle voice that calls
When none but I am near.

But where the mountain summits rise
Is ever sacred sod,
And here thy timid counsel breathes
A deep appeal to God.

Ah, least of all the many flowers
That on my path are set,
Read me thy Sermon on the Mount:
What should I not forget?

"Forget me not." How simple seems
The counsel shyly given!
Let each interpret for himself
This voice of earth and heaven.

Ah! once on Albula's gray pass
I prayed that I might get,
With foresight of a darker day,
The sad leave to forget;

Nor knew, alas! how soon would come
Sore need to urge my prayer.
Ah, tender maidens of the hill
That constant sorrow share.

Forget? Ah, yes! the living fade
From memory, not the dead.
Thine are their voices as to-day
These alien hills I tread.

Tokio.

TO A MAGNOLIA FLOWER

IN THE GARDEN OF THE ARMENIAN CONVENT AT VENICE

I saw thy beauty in its high estate
Of perfect empire, where at set of sun
In the cool twilight of thy lucent leaves
The dewy freshness told that day was done.

Hast thou no gift beyond thine ivory cone's
  Surpassing loveliness? Art thou not near —
More near than we — to nature's silentness;
  Is it not voiceful to thy finer ear?

Thy folded secrecy doth like a charm
  Compel to thought. What spring-born yearning lies
Within the quiet of thy stainless breast
  That doth with languorous passion seem to rise?

The soul doth truant angels entertain
  Who with reluctant joy their thoughts confess:
Low-breathing, to these sister spirits give
  The virgin mysteries of thy heart to guess.

What whispers hast thou from yon childlike sea
  That sobs all night beside these garden walls?
Canst thou interpret what the lark hath sung
  When from the choir of heaven her music falls?

If for companionship of purity
  The equal pallor of the risen moon
Disturb thy dreams, dost know to read aright
  Her silver tracery on the dark lagoon?

The mischief-making fruitfulness of May
  Stirs all the garden folk with vague desires.
Doth there not reach thine apprehensive ear
  The faded longing of these dark-robed friars,

When, in the evening hour to memories given,
  Some gray-haired man amid the gathering gloom
For one delirious moment sees again
  The gleam of eyes and white-walled Erzeroum?

Hast thou not loved him for this human dream?
Or sighed with him who yesterevening sat
Upon the low sea-wall, and saw through tears
His ruined home and snow-clad Ararat?

If thou art dowered with some refinèd sense
That shares the counsels of the nesting bird,
Canst hear the mighty laughter of the earth,
And all that ear of man hath never heard,

If the abysmal stillness of the night
Be eloquent for thee, if thou canst read
The glowing rubric of the morning song,
Doth each new day no gentle warning breed?

Shall not the gossip of the maudlin bee,
The fragrant history of the fallen rose,
Unto the prescience of instinctive love
Some humbler prophecy of joy disclose?

Cold vestal of the leafy convent cell,
The traitor days have thy calm trust betrayed;
The sea-wind boldly parts thy shining leaves
To let the angel in. Be not afraid!

The gold-winged sun, divinely penetrant,
The pure annunciation of the morn
Breathes o'er thy chastity, and to thy soul
The tender thrill of motherhood is borne.

Set wide the glory of thy radiant bloom!
Call every wind to share thy scented breaths!
No life is brief that doth perfection win.
To-day is thine — to-morrow thou art death's!

CORTINO D'AMPEZZO, *July* 1897.

ON A BOY'S FIRST READING OF THE PLAY OF "KING HENRY THE FIFTH"

When youth was lord of my unchallenged fate,
And time seemed but the vassal of my will,
I entertainèd certain guests of state —
The great of older days, who, faithful still,
Have kept with me the pact my youth had made.

And I remember how one galleon rare
From the far distance of a time long dead
Came on the wings of a fair-fortuned air,
With sound of martial music heralded,
In blazonry of storied shields arrayed.

So the *Great Harry* with high trumpetings,
The wind of victory in her burly sails!
And all her deck with clang of armor rings:
And under-flown the Lily standard trails,
And over-flown the royal Lions ramp.

The waves she rode are strewn with silent wrecks,
Her proud sea-comrades once; but ever yet
Comes time-defying laughter from her decks,
Where stands the lion-lord Plantagenet,
Large-hearted, merry, king of court and camp.

Sail on! sail on! The fatal blasts of time,
That spared so few, shall thee with joy escort;

And with the stormy thunder of thy rhyme
Shalt thou salute full many a centuried port
With "Ho! for Harry and red Agincourt!"

1898.

GUIDARELLO GUIDARELLI

RAVENNA WARRIOR (1502)

What was said to the Duke by the sculptor concerning Guidarello Guidarelli, and of the monument he made of his friend.[1]

I

"GUIDARELLO GUIDARELLI!"
Ran a murmur low or loud,
As he rode with lifted vizor,
Smiling on the anxious crowd.

"Guidarello Guidarelli!"
Rang the cry from street and tower,
As our Guido rode to battle
In Ravenna's darkest hour.

"Guidarello Guidarelli!"
Little thought we of his doom
When a love-cast rain of roses
Fell on saddle, mail, and plume.

[1] This monumental recumbent statue is now in the museum at Ravenna.

Low he bowed, and laughing gaily
Set one red rose in his crest,
All his mail a scarlet splendor
Frem the red sun of the west.

"Guidarello Guidarelli!"
So, he passed to meet his fate,
With the cry of "Guidarelli!"
And the clangor of the gate.

II

Well, at eve we bore him homeward,
Lying on our burdened spears.
Ah! defeat had been less bitter,
And had cost us fewer tears.

At her feet we laid her soldier,
While men saw her with amaze —
Fearless, tearless, waiting patient,
Some wild challenge in her gaze.

Then the hand that rained the roses
Fell upon his forehead cold.
"Go!" she cried, "ye faltering cravens!
One that fled, your shame has told.

"Go! How dare ye look upon him —
Ye who failed him in the fight?
Off! ye beaten hounds, and leave me
With my lonely dead to-night!"

No man answered, and they left us
Where our darling Guido lay.

I alone, who stood beside him
In the fight, made bold to stay.

"Shut the gate!" she cried. I closed it.
"Lay your hand upon his breast;
Were you true to him?" "Ay, surely,
As I hope for Jesu's rest!"

Then I saw her staring past me,
As to watch a bird that flies,
All the light of youthful courage
Fading from her valiant eyes.

And with one hoarse cry of anguish
On the courtyard stones she fell,
Crying, "Guido Guidarelli!"
Like the harsh notes of a bell

Breaking with its stress of sweetness,
Hence to know a voiceless pain.
"Guidarello Guidarelli!"
Never did she speak again:

Save, 't is said, she wins, when dreaming,
Tender memories of delight;
"Guidarello Guidarelli!"
Crying through the quiet night.

III

Ah! you like it? Well, I made it
Ere death aged upon his face.
See, I caught the parted lip-lines
And the lashes' living grace:

For the gentle soul within him,
Freed by death, had lingered here,
Kissing his dead face to beauty,
As to bless a home grown dear.

He, my lord, was pure as woman,
Past the thought of man's belief;
Truth and honor here are written,
And some strangeness of relief

Born beneath my eager chisel
As a child is born — a birth
To my parent-skill mysterious,
Of, and yet not all of, earth.

Still one hears our women singing,—
For a love-charm, so 't is said,—
" Guidarello Guidarelli ! "
Like a love-mass for the dead.

In caressing iteration
With his name their voices play —
" Elli, Nelli, Guidarelli,"
Through some busy market-day.

Ah, my lord, I have the fancy
That through many a year to come
This I wrought shall make the stranger
Share our grief when mine is dumb.

VENICE, *June* 1897.

A WAR SONG OF TYROL

FREELY ENGLISHED FROM JOHANN SENN

(1792–1858)

"Wild eagle of the Tyrol,
Why are thy feathers red?"
"I 've been to greet the morning
On Ortler's crimsoned head!"

"Gray eagle of the Tyrol,
'T is not the morning light
Drips from the soaring pinions
That wing thine airy flight.

"Proud eagle of the Tyrol,
Why are thy claws so red?"
"I 've been where Etschland's maidens
The ruddy vintage tread."

"Gray eagle of the Tyrol,
Red runs our Tyrol wine;
But redder ran the vintage
That stained those claws of thine.

"Wild eagle of the Tyrol,
Why is thy beak so red?"
"Go ask the gorge of Stilfes,[1]
Where lie the Saxon dead!

[1] Here the Tyrolese defeated Marshal Lefebvre and the Saxon auxiliaries of France.

"The grapes were ripe in August
Wherewith my beak is red;
The vines that gave that vintage
No other wine will shed:
My beak is red with battle;
I've been among the dead!"

1897.

THE "TEXAS"

SEEN FROM THE BEACH AT ATLANTIC CITY, MAY 6, 1898

Fair in the white array of peace,
We saw her from the distant shore,
And felt the quickened pulse increase
To know what gallant flag she bore.
Proud namesake of the Lonely Star,
God speed thee on thy watery way,
Or be it peace, or be it war,
That waits thee in that Southern bay.
To yon far island of the sea,
Twin sister of the Lonely Star,
Good-luck and honor go with thee,
Or be it peace, or be it war!

1898.

THE SEA-GULL

I

THE woods are full of merry minstrelsy;
Glad are the hedges with the notes of spring;
But o'er the sad and uncompanioned sea
No love-born voices ring.

II

Gray mariner of every ocean clime,
If I could wander on as sure a wing,
Or beat with yellow web thy pathless sea,
I too might cease to sing.

III

Would I could share thy silver-flashing swoop,
Thy steady poise above the bounding deep,
Or buoyant float with thine instinctive trust,
Rocked in a dreamless sleep.

IV

Thine is the heritage of simple things,
The untasked liberty of sea and air,
Some tender yearning for the peopled nest,
Thy only freight of care.

V

Thou hast no forecast of the morrow's need,
No bitter memory of yesterdays;
Nor stirs thy thought that airy sea o'erhead,
Nor ocean's soundless ways.

VI

Thou silent raider of the abounding sea,
Intent and resolute, ah, who may guess
What primal notes of gladness thou hast lost
In this vast loneliness!

VII

Where bides thy mate? On some lorn ocean rock
Seaward she watches. Hark! the one shrill cry,
Strident and harsh, across the wave shall be
Her welcome — thy reply.

VIII

When first thy sires, with joy-discovered flight,
High on exultant pinions sped afar,
Had they no cry of gladness or of love,
No bugle note of war?

IX

What gallant song their happy treasury held,
Such as the pleasant woodland folk employ,
The lone sea thunder quelled. Thou hast one note
For love, for hate, for joy.

X

Yet who that hears this stormy ocean voice
Would not, like them, at last be hushed and stilled,
Were all his days through endless ages past
With this stern music filled?

XI

What matters it? Ah! not alone are loved
Leaf-cloistered poets who can love in song.
Home to the wild-eyed! Home! She will not miss
The music lost so long.

XII

Home! for the night wind signals, "Get thee home";
Home, hardy admiral of the rolling deep;
Home from the foray! Home! That silenced song
Love's endless echoes keep.

1898.

EGYPT

I saw two vultures, gray they were and gorged:
One on a mosque sat high, asleep he seemed,
Claw-stayed within the silver crescent's curve;
Not far away, another, gray as he,
As full content and somnolent with food,
Clutched with instinctive grip the golden cross
High on the church an alien creed had built.
Yon in the museum mighty Rameses sleeps,
For some new childhood swaddled like a babe.
Osiris and Jehovah, Allah, Christ,
This land hath known, and, in the dawn of time,
The brute-god-creature crouching in the sand,
Ere Rameses worshipped and ere Seti died.
How much of truth to each new faith He gave
Who is the very father of all creeds,

I know not now — nor shall know. Ever still
Past temple, palace, tomb, the great Nile flows,
Free and more free of bounty as men learn
To use his values. Only this I know.

CAIRO, 1899.

GIBRALTAR AT DAWN

UP and over the sea we came,
And saw the dayspring leap to flame.
Full in face Gibraltar lay,
Crouching, lion-like, at bay,
Stern and still and battle-scarred,
Grimly keeping watch and ward.
Hark, and hear the morning gun
Salute time's admiral, the sun,
While the bleak old storied keep,
That hath never known to sleep,
Golden 'neath the morning lies,
Sentinelled with memories,
Heard when, rolling from afar,
The hoarse waves thunder, "Trafalgar!"

AT SEA, *December* 1898.

STORM-WAVES AND FOG ON DORR'S POINT, BAR HARBOR

The fog's gray curtain round me draws,
And leaves no world to me
Save this swift drama of the stirred
And restless sea.

Forth of the shrouding fog they roll,
As from a viewless world,
Leap spectral white, and, pausing, break,
In thunder hurled.

Ever they climb and cling anew,
Slide from the smooth rock wall,
With thin white fingers grip the weeds
And seaward crawl.

In rhythmic rote o'er shivering sands
They glide adown the shore
With murmurous whispering of "Hush!"
And then no more.

1907.

THE BIRTHDAY OF WASHINGTON

1900

Remembering him we praise to-day,
Hushed is the mighty roar of trade,
And, pausing on its ardent way,
A nation's homage here is paid.

Upon the great Virginian's grave
Look down the new-born century's eyes,
Where by his loved Potomac wave
In God's long rest His soldier lies.

A hundred years have naught revealed
To blot this manhood's record high,
'That blazoned duty's stainless shield
And set a star in honor's sky.'

In self-approval firm, his life
Serenely passed through darkest days;
In calm or storm, in peace or strife,
Unmoved by blame, unstirred by praise.

No warrior pride disturbed his peace,
Nor place nor gain. He loved his fields,
His home, the chase, his land's increase,
The simple life that nature yields.

And yet for us all man could give
He gave, with that which never dies,
The gift through which great nations live,
The lifelong gift of sacrifice.

With true humility he learned
The game of war, the art of rule;
And, calmly patient, slowly earned
His competence in life's large school.

Well may we honor him who sought
To live with one unfailing aim,
And found at last, unasked, unsought,
In duty's path, the jewel, fame!

And He who girded him with power,
And gave him strength to do the right,
Will ask of us, in some stern hour,
"How have *ye* used the gift of might?"

Since, till this harried earth shall gain
The heaven of Thy peace, O Lord!
Freedom and Law will need to reign
Beneath the shadow of the sword.

FLORENCE[1]

APRIL FIRST

Come, let us be the willing fools
Of April's earliest day,
And dream we own all pleasant things
The years have reft away.

'T is but to take the poet's wand,
A touch or here or there,
And I have lost that ancient stoop,
And you are young and fair.

Ah, no! The years that gave and took
Have left with you and me
The wisdom of the widening stream;
Trust we the larger sea.

WHICH?

Birth-day or Earth-day,
Which the true mirth-day?
Earth-day or birth-day,
Which the well-worth day?

February 15, 1909.

[1] Except the last two lines, which I failed to capture, the rest of these verses I composed while asleep. I have many times seemed to make verses in sleep; only thrice could I recall them on waking. The four lines called "Which" were also made in sleep. The psychological interest of this sleep product may excuse this personal statement.

JEKYL ISLAND

EBB-TIDE

Fading light on a lonely beach,
A slow out-creeping tide
That leaves to me on sea-etched sands
The ocean's cryptic speech.

Adown the ever broadening strand
Moon-witched waters steal,
And over the dunes a wild wind swoops
And frets the silted sand.

INDIAN SUMMER

The stillness that doth wait on change is here,
Some pause of expectation owns the hour;
And faint and far I hear the sea complain
Where gray and answerless the headlands tower.

Slow fails the evening of the dying year,
Misty and dim the waiting forests lie,
Chill ocean winds the wasted woodland grieve,
And earthward loitering the leaves go by.

Behold how nature answers death! O'erhead
The memoried splendor of her summer eves
Lavished and lost, her wealth of sun and sky,
Scarlet and gold, are in her drifting leaves.

Vain pageantry! for this, alas, is death,
Nor may the seasons' ripe fulfilment cheat
My thronging memories of those who died
With life's young summer promise incomplete.

The dead leaves rustle 'neath my lingering tread.
Low murmuring ever to the spirit ear:
We were, and yet again shall be once more,
In the sure circuits of the rolling year.

Trust thou the craft of nature. Lo! for thee
A comrade wise she moves, serenely sweet,
With wilful prescience mocking sense of loss
For us who mourn love's unreturning feet.

Trust thou her wisdom, she will reconcile
The faltering spirit to eternal change
When, in her fading woodways, thou shalt touch
Dear hands long dead and know them not as strange.

For thee a golden parable she breathes
Where in the mystery of this repose,
While death is dreaming life, the waning wood
With far-caught light of heaven divinely glows.

Thou, when the final loneliness draws near,
And earth to earth recalls her tired child,
In the sweet constancy of nature strong
Shalt dream again — how dying nature smiled.

Bar Harbor, 1900.

FRIENDSHIP

No wail of grief can equal answer win:
  Love's faltering echo may but ill express
The grief for grief, nor more than faintly mock
  The primal cry of some too vast distress.
Or is it for fair company of joy
  We ask an equal echo from the heart?
A certain loneliness is ever ours,
  And friendship mourns her still imperfect art.

1908.

LOVE

"For I have always loved you for many reasons and in many ways."— P. B.

The daily tribute of the sun
  Lives on, in tree, and fruit, and flower;
  Lives on, with subtle change of power,
When the last hour of day is done.

And what the kindly sun has given,
  Reborn in many a varied form,
  Is in the wind, the sea, the storm,
And when the lightning flames through heaven,

And is itself again; and so
  Through many ways of diverse change
  Has love equality of range,
And back again as love may flow;

For deathless, as God's sunlight still,
Its tender ministry renewed
In each divine beatitude,
Shall love its purposes fulfil.

INNOGEN

A stage direction in the old copies of "Much Ado about Nothing" is: "Enter Leonato, Governour of Messina, *Innogen* his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his niece, and a messenger." As the wife of Leonato takes no part in the action, and neither speaks nor is spoken to throughout the play, she was probably no more than a character the poet had designed in his first sketch of the plot, and which he found reason to omit afterward.

IMMORTAL shadow, faint and ever fair,
Dear for unspoken words that might have been,
Compelled to silent sorrow none may share,
A ghost of Shakespeare's world, unheard, unseen,
How many more like thee have voiceless stood
Uncalled upon the threshold of his mind,
The speechless children of a mighty brood
Who were and are not! Never shall they find
The happier comrades unto whom he gave
Thought, speech, and action — they who shall not know
The end of our realities, the grave,
Nor what is sadder, life, nor any human woe.

PRAYER

When the day is growing old
And the stars their vigils keep,
Lo, a gentle voice within
Calling to the fold of sleep.

Whither, thither, know I not:
His the silence, His the care,
When my soul is called to rest,
Shepherded by quiet prayer.

THE ANGELS OF PRAYER

Ye to whom my prayer is given,
Gentle couriers of heaven,
Sailing through the world of space
'Neath the sun of Mary's face,
To the joy of Mary's grace,
Let it seem a little child,
Such as came when Jesu smiled.

A CHILD'S PRAYER

Holy Mother! Holy Mother!
In the dark I fear.
Light me with thy shining eyes,
Be thou ever near.

Holy Mother! Holy Mother!
Call thy little Son,
Bid Him bring me praying dreams
Ere the night be done.

Call the angels, call them early,
Bid them fly to thee,
One to call the little birds,
One to waken me.

LINES GIVEN TO M. AT CHRISTMAS

WITH A GIFT OF THE VIRGIN OF LUINI

WHAT shall I give thee, dear, to-day,
Upon this sacred Christmas morn,
That tells us of the gift of love
God gave when Christ was born,

And hope became a seraph winged
With timeless dreams, and love elate
Saw with young eyes another world
Where love's lost angels wait?

Ah, small were any richest gift
Without such love as thro' the years
Was sweeter for the hour of joy
And nobler for the day of tears.

Take, then, with love this gentle face
That had a more than human share
Of joy and grief, and haply, too,
Through the long years of sorrow bore

In that gray village of the hills,
The sense of some diviner loss
Than death deals out, and evermore
The anguish of the lifted cross.

1905.

THE PURE OF HEART

GENNESARET

O'ER my head the starry legions marched upon their trackless way;
Far below, Gennesaret's waters, silent, in the moonlight lay,
And the Orient, brooding mother of all creeds that men hold dear,
Cast her mystic spell upon me, and I murmured, "Was it here?"
Was it here a man, a peasant, strange ambassador of God,
Called to hear His stately message those sad children of the sod;
Sowed for them hope's boundless harvest, lavished for those shepherds rude
All that wonder-wealth of promise, each divine beatitude?

Marvelling, my thought I carried into sleep, and if the earth
Breathed some memory of the legend, or in dreams it had its birth,
Who may say? I tell the story as it came to me at night,
From the underworld of slumber, from the inner world of light.
On the hilltop, in the twilight, grave and still the Master lay,
While the westward summits crimsoned, lustrous in the dying day.
What had I to learn, a rabbi, schooled and lessoned in the law?
Half in doubt and half in wonder, there apart I stood, and saw
How some gentle impulse moved Him, and there came upon His face,
With the final gold of sunset, other light, of joy and grace,
While the mountains cast their shadows, slowly cloaking all the hill
Where the multitude in silence waited on the Master's will;
For His features stirred, uplifted as with thought upon the wing,
Stirred as stirs the great earth-mother when she feels her child, the spring.
Wistfully men bided, longing for the voice their eyes entreat,
Forward bent, hands locked, and quiet, till He rose upon His feet.

And He gave as none has given through the long and weary years,
Blessings that have lightened labor, promises that answer tears.
When at last the white-clad peasants slowly from the hill withdrew,
Long I lingered, why I knew not, till at last I surely knew
That my soul some yearning counselled, bidding me remain. I stayed,
Bolder for the dark, then heard Him: "Rabbi, ask. Be not afraid."
Low I questioned: "Lord and Master, who most surely are the pure?
Is it they who, born and dying, have no sorrow to endure,
Like the snow that melts at morning, from the soil of earth secure?
Who is it shall see . . .?" But spoke not that one word is left unsaid
When the priest intones the psalmist, and the sacred scrolls are read.
"Who is it shall dare behold Him, and the Nameless One abide,
When the seraphs' wings are folded, and the angel hosts divide?"
Then I felt how great my daring, and my forehead flushed with shame;
Like a child in fear I waited, waited for the word of blame.
But He said, "Draw near, O Rabbi," and those strange eyes fell on mine,

And I knew that not in folly I had sought what none divine.
Touching heart and lips and forehead, as when one salutes a friend,
Low I bent, assured and silent, waiting what His heart would send.
" See, O Rabbi," and a gesture summoned with the lifted hand;
Lo, a mighty wind, arising, drave across the wakened land,
Swept Gennesaret's startled waters, beat across the billowed grain,
Waking from its evening quiet, far below, the dreaming plain,
While the gnarled and aged olives wildly swayed above my head,
Heavy with the summer fruitage wherewithal a man is fed,
Rich with oil that feeds the lamps that keep remembrance of the dead.
And, behold, the wind He summoned for His parable, at will,
Gone as flies a bird, and stillness fell upon the lonely hill.
" Thou art learned in all our learning. Once at Nazareth I saw
How men listened to Thy teaching, ' Come and read My higher law.' "
" Rabbi, Rabbi, sweet at evening are the lilies bending low;
Was it prayer they breathed, when rising from their dewy overflow? "

Wondering, I answered: "Master, who may know? But pure and sweet
Are they to the desert weary, freshness to the sand-hot feet."
For I guessed where now He led me, and with thought that swift forewent,
As if spirit spake to spirit, glad at heart, I stood intent.
"Lo," He said, "behold the olives failing with the summer heat,
Guarding still their precious harvest, though the mad wind on them beat."
"Yea," I cried. "Oh, surely, Master, strong are they, yet pure and sweet."
For I guessed the fuller meaning of His speech, as one foreknows
When on Lebanon the rose-light prophet of the dawning glows.
And I said: "Not they are purest who, in hermit trance of prayer,
Bide untempted in the desert, sinless as Thy lilies were;
More there be who share Thy promise, more for whom this hope has smiled:
They the burdened, they the weary, they who ever, unbeguiled,
Through the home, the street, the market, bear the white heart of the child."
Lingering, I heard His answer: "Go in peace." I moved away,
While afar the westward summits slowly turned from gold to gray.

Bar Harbor, *October* 1904.

THE COMFORT OF THE HILLS

> Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills.

HERE have I wandered oft these many years
Far from the world's restraint, my heart at ease,
With equal liberty of joy or tears
To welcome Nature's generosities,
Where these gray summits give the unburdened mind
To clearer thought, in freedom unconfined.
What made this wide estate of hill and plain
So surely mine to-day? Of God, the law
That gave to joy the right of ampler reign —
For in love's title none may find a flaw,
And mine the equities of tribute brought
From vassal lands no earthly gold has bought.

As flit gray gulls, with silver flash of wings,
Leap and are lost the whitecaps of the sea
When swoops the norther o'er the deep and sings
Mad music in the hemlocks, and for me
A litany of joy and hope and praise,
Sweet to the man who knows laborious days.

The wild hawk here is playmate of my thought.
Like him I soar, upon as eager wings,
And something of his liberty have caught,
The simple pleasure in material things,
Unvexed, in thoughtless joy a child to be,
The moment's friend of all the eye can see.

Kind to the dreamer is this solitude.
Fair courtesies of silence wait to know
What hopes are flattering a poet mood,
Stirred by frail ecstasies that come and go,
Like birds that let the quivering leaves prolong
The broken music of their passing song.

Here may we choose what company shall be ours;
Here bend before one fair divinity
To whose dear feet we bring the spirit-flowers,
Fragments of song, stray waifs of poetry,
The orphans of dead dreams, more sweet than aught
Won by decisive days of sober thought.

Day-dreams that feed the folly of the fool,
The wisdom of the wise, the hour endears;
Despite the discipline of life's stern school,
And the gray quiet of monastic years,
I sit, companioned by life's young desires,
And warm my fancies at yon sunset fires.

For 't is the children's hour, and I, the child,
Self-credulous, am pleased myself to tell
Stories that have no ending, ventures wild
O'er chartless oceans to glad isles where dwell
Loves that no bitter debt to time shall pay,
Loves that to-morrow shall be as to-day.

Ay, 't is enchantment's hour. A herald star
Marshals the silent armies of the night.
The eastward scarlet frets the waves. Afar
Fades in the pallid west a violet light,
And murmurs of the tide rise up to me,
Huge breathing of the sea's immensity.

Among the hills I know a dreaming lake
No wind disturbs, and drowsily it seems
The pictured stillness to itself to take.
All day it sleeps, and then at evening dreams
Brown twilight shadows,— till it dreams at dark
A silver dream, the pale moon's crescent bark.

* * *

There is a hill-crest where the dwarfish forms
Of crippled pines a scant subsistence win:
Gnarled by long battle with the winter storms,
Scarred cousins of their stately forest kin,
Whence came the force that waged victorious strife
For the mere hold upon their meagre life?

Companionable folk are they; at ease
Upon the rocks their wooden elbows rest.
Something they hint of ancient pleasantries;
Grim burgher soldiers they, who take with zest
Their pension of the sunshine, half aware
Of one with right their lazing life to share.

As wearily the mountain crest I gain,
Mysterious vigor feels the freshened mind,
And wide horizons gladden eye and brain.
Serenely confident I wait to find
Thoughts that no clouded hours knew to guess
Float upward to the light of consciousness.

Here truth the certainty of instinct feels,
When joy akin to awe the soul acquires,
And beauty, God's interpreter, reveals
Something of Him no meaner hour inspires.
Help Thou my unbelief, that I may be
By Nature's mother-hand led near to Thee.

Once, all there was of beauty on the earth
Became religion. Love was but a prayer
To gentle deities, whose sylvan mirth
Heard man or maid, at dusk of eve, aware
Of gods who shared love's piety, and of faint
Sweet whispers from some pagan flower saint.

If these were dreams, I envy those who dreamed
Into the world long dramas of belief,
This joyous passion-play of gods who seemed
To be so near to human joy and grief;
Or were they tender yearnings willed by Him
Whose creed left lonely all the woodways dim?

If I have lost this heritage divine,
Some pentecostal hour may give to me
The tongues earth's childhood knew, and it be mine
To read beyond what seems reality.
Grant me this gift of wisdom's fullest flower,
O fair Egeria of the evening hour.

Lo, in the twilight's dim confessional
Come agèd voices from this ice-scarred rock;
I hear the avalanche in thunder fall,
The glacier's many voices, and the shock
When from these granite shoulders, seaward hurled,
Fell the white ruin of an elder world.

My summer friends, the maples, cease to shed
Their red and gold, are bare and gaunt and gray.
In changeless quiet, towering overhead,
Hemlock and pine defy the autumn's sway,
The wintry winds. To them the call of spring
A gracious autumn with the birds shall bring.

If time might hold for us no sad surprise
Of autumn's mournful change, what joy it were,
Earth-fed, deep-rooted, year by year to rise
Where thought uplifted breathes serener air,
And at life's ripest, of a summer day
To feel the lightning fall and pass away.

Among these rifted rocks creep stealthily
Faint dusking shadows, and the forest air
Stirs when the topmost leaves, uneasily,
A moment shiver in the winds that bear
Hoarse murmurs from the unrepentant deep;
Like one who mutters of far deaths in sleep.

A strange supremacy of quietness
Awaits the thoughtful where, in wreckage vast,
These riven rocks old agonies confess,
The half-told story of a dateless past;
Prophetic dooms of change the soul oppress,
And some chill sense of ancient loneliness.

Why in this scene my truant footsteps found
Should come to me the urgent thought of death?
For when this ruin fell, the barren ground
Knew naught of life, nor any mortal breath.
Yet generous of color are to-day
These moss-clad rocks, with fern and lichen gay.

Alas, vain thought! Death's royal loneliness
Still bids the voice of love its silence share,
Where, in that land of grief companionless,
Familiar things a far remoteness wear,
And futile thoughts, like yearning tendrils, find
No hold secure, and hope and faith are blind.

Yet Nature stands, a finger on her lips,
Glad mother of mysterious sympathy,
Sure as the light that through the greenery slips,
Far-winged at eve with loving certainty,
To gild these glooming rocks, by glaciers worn,
With constant promise of another morn.

If Nature, soulless, knows not how to weep,
Take that she has for thee. Wilt know how much?
Bring here thy cares, and find upon the steep
Some kingly healing in the wild wind's touch.
The best of love and life is mystery,—
Take thou the pine-trees' benedicite!

The years that come as friend and leave as foe,
The years that come as foes, and friends depart,
Leave for remembrance more of joy than woe,
All memory sifting with Time's gentle art,
Till He who guides the swallow's wintry wing
Gives to our grief-winged love as sure a spring.

The mountain summit brings no bitter thought;
And in my glad surrender to its power,
Familiar spirits come to me unsought,
But unto thee, my child, the twilight hour,
When level sun-shafts of the waning day
Their girdling gold upon the forest lay.

Here, long ago, we talked or silent knew
The woodland awe of things about to be,
And, as the nearing shadows round us drew,
Some growing sense of unreality,
Ancestral pagan moods of far descent
That thronged the peopled woods with wonderment.

Art with me now, and this thy gentle hand?
Or is it that love's yearning love deceives,
And in too real a solitude I stand,
Hearing no footfall in the rustling leaves,
Sole comrade of far sorrows, left alone
The wakened memory of a dream to own?

Slow fades the light of day's most solemn hour.
The autumn leaves are drifting overhead.
In vain I yearn for some compelling power
To keep for me these ever-living dead.
Peace, peace, sad heart; for thee a gentle breeze,
God's angelus, is sighing in the trees.

Bar Harbor, *September* 1906.

AN ODE OF BATTLES

GETTYSBURG AND SANTIAGO

Long ages past
The slow ice sledges bore
These alien rocks from some far other shore;
Gray witnesses of power
In some prophetic hour
Dropped on the glacier's bed,
Strange burial-stones, to find at last
Their long-awaited dead.

Here, as if to mock regret,
Has careless nature set
The wild rose and the violet;

For what to her is battle's iron lot?
She has no memory of a day
When man had ceased to slay,
And by her strife his war is infant play;
Yet here the frail forget-me-not
Entreats remembrance of what death may gain:
For not in vain
Upon this lone hillside
Uncounted hopes have died;
And not in vain
The lordship of the soul
In that wild strife
Asked an heroic dole,
The tribute gift of life,
While homes long held in bondage of their fears
Heard what they too had spent and wailed in tears,—
The loss of youth's young love and manhood's remnant years.

Weep for thy many dead,
O Northland, weep!
Even for thy triumph weep!
Here too our brothers sleep;
Not we alone have bled.
Tears! tears for those who lost!
For bitter was the cost
When that ripe manhood at its flood
Ebbed away in blood.
Yet who beneath the shrouded sun
Upon yon battle-wearied plain
Could know they too had won,
And had not died in vain?

Gone the days of lingering hate!
Came at last a happier fate
That welded state to state,
When along the island shore
We together stood once more,
And the levin blight and thunder
Were strange echoes of a day
When Spain's galleons went under.
Or, death-hunted, fled away,
While the sturdy gales that keep
Guard o'er England, beach and steep,
Sped the billows from afar,
Leaping hounds of the sea's wild war,
And set them on the track
Where, o'er ruin and o'er wrack,
Shrouding all
Fell the fog's gray funeral pall,
And the sea-greed took its toll
Of the pride of Philip's soul.

Hark and hear, ye admirals dead!
Comrades of the burly deep,
Whatsoever decks ye tread,
Wheresoever watch ye keep,—
Hark! the channel surges still
Roll o'er wrecks ye left to bide
The master might of the sea's stern will,
Scourge of storm and stress of tide:
When upon the Spaniard's flight
Closed in shame the northern night,
Not yours alone the count of sorrow
Ye left to some avenging morrow:
Far-sown islands west and east,

Thro' one long revel of misrule,
Reign of tyrant, knave, or fool,—
Cursed too the bigot and the priest.
From their days of bitter need,
From the sea-lords of our breed,
To the patience of the strong
Fell that heritage of wrong.
Rest in peace, ye captains bold:
When the tide of battle rolled
Thunderous on the island shore,
To thy children's hand the Lord
Gave for judgment doom the sword.
And at last forevermore
On those haunted Cuban coasts
That long-gathering debt was paid
And the sad and silent ghosts
Of unnumbered wrongs were laid.

Awake, sad Island Sister! Wake to be
The glad young child of liberty.
The storm of battle wholesomely
Has swept thy borders free.
Ringed with the azure of the Carib Sea,
No more the joy of thy abounding waves
Shall mock a land of slaves.

And lo! the matchless prize,
Great kingdoms craved with eager eyes,
Was ours blood-bought.
With no base afterthought
We left unransomed and complete
Earth's richest jewel at fair Freedom's feet;
Her dream of hope a glad reality;

Our share a memory!
Ah, never since the lightning of gray war
In other lands afar
Dismembered nations smote, and justice slept
While greed her plunder kept,
Has conquest left no shame
Upon the victor's name;
But here at last from war's sad field
Proud honor bore a stainless shield,
And o'er our silent dead the air
Throbbed with Freedom's answered prayer.

POEMS OF OCCASION

POEMS OF OCCASION

A DOCTOR'S CENTURY

READ AT THE CENTENNIAL DINNER OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF PHILADELPHIA, 1887

A Doctor's century dead and gone!
  Good-night to those one hundred years,
To all the memories they bear
  Of honest help for pains or tears;

To them that like St. Christopher,
  When North and South were sad with graves,
Bore the true Christ of charity
  Across the battles' crimson waves.

Good-night to all the shining line,
  Our peerage,— yes, our lords of thought;
Their blazonry, unspotted lives
  Which all the ways of honor taught.

A gentler word, as proud a thought,
For those who won no larger prize
Than humble days well lived can win
From thankful hearts and weeping eyes.

Too grave my song; a lighter mood
Shall bid us scan our honored roll,
For jolly jesters gay and good,
Who healed the flesh and charmed the soul,

And took their punch, and took the jokes
Would make our prudish conscience tingle,
Then bore their devious lanterns home,
And slept, or heard the night-bell jingle.

Our Century's dead; God rest his soul!
Without a doctor or a nurse,
Without a "post," without a dose,
He's off on Time's old rattling hearse.

What sad disorder laid him out
To all pathologists is dim;
An intercurrent malady,—
Bacterium chronos, finished him!

Our new-born century, pert and proud,
Like some young doctor fresh from college,
Disturbs our prudent age with doubts
And misty might of foggy knowledge.

Ah, but to come again and share
The gains his calmer days shall store,
For them that in a hundred years
Shall see our "science grown to more,"

Perchance as ghosts consultant we
May stand beside some fleshly fellow,
And marvel what on earth he means,
When this new century's old and mellow.

Take then the thought that wisdom fades,
That knowledge dies of newer truth,
That only duty simply done
Walks always with the step of youth.

A grander morning floods our skies
With higher aims and larger light;
Give welcome to the century new,
And to the past a glad good-night.

MINERVA MEDICA

VERSES READ AT THE DINNER COMMEMORATIVE OF THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE DOCTORATE OF D. HAYES AGNEW, M. D., APRIL 6, 1888

Good Chairman, Brothers, Friends, and Guests,—
all ye who come with praise
To honor for our ancient guild a life of blameless days,
If from the well-worn road of toil I step aside to find
A poet's roses for the wreath your kindly wishes bind,
Be certain that their fragrance types, amid your laurel
leaves,
The gentle love a tender heart in duty's chaplet weaves.

I can't exactly set the date,— the Chairman he will know,—
But it was on a chilly night, some month or two ago.
Within, the back-log warmed my toes; without, the frozen rain,
Storm-driven by the angry wind, clashed on my window-pane.
I lit a pipe, stirred up the fire, and, dry with thirst for knowledge,
Plunged headlong in an essay by a Fellow of the College.
But, sir, I 've often seen of late that this especial thirst
Is not of all its varied forms the keenest or the worst.
At all events, that gentleman — that pleasant College Fellow —
He must have been of all of us the juiciest and most mellow.
You ask his name, degree, and fame; you want to know that rare man?
It was n't you,— nor you,— nor you,— no, sir, 't was not the Chairman!
For minutes ten I drank of him; quenched was my ardent thirst;
Another minute, and my veins with knowledge, sir, had burst;
A moment more, my head fell back, my lazy eyelids closed,
And on my lap that Fellow's book at equal peace reposed.
Then I remembered me the night that essay first was read,
And how we thought it could n't all have come from one man's head.

At nine the College heard a snore and saw the Chairman start,—
A snore as of an actor shy rehearsing for his part.
At ten, a shameless chorus around the hall had run,
The Chairman dreamed a feeble joke, and said the noes had won.
At twelve the Treasurer fell asleep, the wakeful Censors slumbered,
The Secretary's minutes grew to hours quite unnumbered.
At six A. M. that Fellow paused, perchance a page to turn,
And up I got, and cried, "I move the College do adjourn!"
They did n't, sir; they sat all day. It made my flesh to creep.
All night they sat; — that could n't be. Goodness! was I asleep?
Was I asleep? With less effect that Fellow might have tried
Codeia, Morphia, Urethan, Chloral, Paraldehyde.
In vain my servant called aloud, "Sir, here 's a solemn letter
To say they want a song from you, for lack of some one better.
The Chairman says his man will wait, while you sit down and write;
He says he's not in any haste,— and make it something light;
He says you need n't vex yourself to try to be effulgent,
Because, he says, champagne enough will keep them all indulgent."
I slept — at least I think I slept — an hour by estimation,
But if I slept, I must have had unconscious cerebration,

For on my desk, the morrow morn, I found this ordered verse;
Pray take it as you take your wife,—"for better or for worse."

A golden wedding: fifty earnest years
This spring-tide day from that do sadly part,
When, 'mid a learned throng, one shy, grave lad,
Half conscious, won the Mistress of our Art.

Still at his side the tranquil goddess stood,
Unseen of men, and claimed the student boy;
Touched with her cool, sweet lips his ruddy cheek,
And bade him follow her through grief and joy.

"Be mine," she whispered in his startled ear,
"Be mine to-day, as Paré once was mine;
Like Hunter mine, and all who nobly won
The fadeless honors of that shining line.

"Be mine," she said, "the calm of honest eyes,
The steadfast forehead, and the constant soul;
Mine the firm heart on simple duty bent,
And mine the manly gift of self-control.

"Not in my service is the harvest won
That gilds the child of barter and of trade;
That steady hand, that ever-pitying touch,
Not in my helping shall be thus repaid.

"But I will take you where the great have gone,
And I will set your feet in honor's ways;
Friends I will give, and length of crowded years,
And crown your manhood with a nation's praise.

"These will I give, and more; the poor man's home,
The anguished sufferer in the clutch of pain,
The camp, the field, the long, sad, waiting ward,
Shall seek your kindly face, nor seek in vain;

"For, as the sculptor-years shall chisel deep
The lines of pity 'neath the brow of thought,
Below your whitening hair the hurt shall read
How well you learned what I my best have taught."

The busy footsteps of your toiling stand
Upon the noisy century's sharp divide,
And at your side, to-night, I see her still,
The gracious woman, strong and tender-eyed.

O stately Mistress of our sacred Art,
Changeless and beautiful and wise and brave,
Full fifty years have gone since first your lips
To noblest uses pledged that forehead grave.

As round the board our merry glasses rang,
His golden-wedding chimes I heard to-night;
We know its offspring; lo, from sea to sea
His pupil-children bless his living light.

What be the marriage-gifts that we can give?
What lacks he that on well-used years attends?
All that we have to give are his to-day,—
Love, honor, and obedience, troops of friends.

VERSES

READ ON THE PRESENTATION BY S. WEIR MITCHELL TO THE PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF SARAH W. WHITMAN'S PORTRAIT OF OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, M. D.

We call them great who have the magic art
To summon tears and stir the human heart,
With fictive grief to bring the soul annoy,
And leave a dew-drop in the rose of joy.
A nobler purpose had the Masters wise
Who from your walls look down with kindly eyes.
Theirs the firm hand and theirs the ready brain
Strong for the battle with disease and pain.
Large were their lives: these scholars, gentle, brave,
Knew all of man from cradle unto grave.
What note of torment had they failed to hear?
All grief's stern gamut knew each pitying ear.
Nor theirs the useless sympathy that stands
Beside the suffering with defenceless hands;
Divinely wise, their pity had the art
To teach the brain the ardor of the heart.
These left a meaner for a nobler George;
These trod the red snows by the Valley Forge,
Saw the wild birth-throes of a nation's life,
The long-drawn misery and the doubtful strife:
Yea, and on darker fields they left their dead
Where grass-grown streets heard but the bearer's tread,
While the sad death-roll of those fatal days
Left small reward beyond the poor man's praise.

Lo! Shadowy greetings from each canvas come,
Lips seem to move now for a century dumb:
From tongues long hushed the sound of welcome falls,
"Place, place for Holmes upon these honored walls."
The lights are out, the festal flowers fade,
Our guests are gone, the great hall wrapped in shade.
Lone in the midst this silent picture stands,
Ringed with the learning of a score of lands.
Fromy dusty tomes in many a tongue I hear
A gentle Babel,—"Welcome, Brother dear.
Yea, though Apollo won thy larger hours,
And stole our fruit, and only left us flowers,
The poet's rank thy title here completes —
Doctor and Poet,— so were Goldsmith,— Keats."
The voices failing murmur to an end
With "Welcome, Doctor, Scholar, Poet, Friend."

In elder days of quiet wiser folks,
When the great Hub had not so many spokes,
Two wandering gods, upon the Common, found
A weary schoolboy sleeping on the ground.
Swift to his brain their eager message went,
Swift to his heart each ardent claim was sent:
"Be mine," Minerva cried. "This tender hand
Skilled in the art of arts shall understand
With magic touch the demon pain to lay.
From skill to skill and on to clearer day
Far through the years shall fare that ample brain
To read the riddles of disease and pain."
"Nay, mine the boy," Apollo cried aloud,
"His the glad errand, beautiful and proud,
To wing the arrows of delightful mirth,
To slay with jests the sadder things of earth.

At his gay science melancholy dies,
At his clear laugh each morbid fancy flies.
Rich is the quiver I shall give his bow,
The eagle's pinion some bold shafts shall know;
Swift to its mark the angry arrow-song
Shall find the centre of a nation's wrong;
Or in a people's heart one tingling shot
Pleads not in vain against the war-ship's lot.
Yea, I will see that for a gentler flight
The dove's soft feathers send his darts aright
When smiles and pathos, kindly wedded, chant
The plaintive lay of that unmarried aunt;
Or sails his Nautilus the sea of time,
Blown by the breezes of immortal rhyme,
Or with a Godspeed from her poet's brain,
Sweet Clémence trips adown the Rue de Seine.
The humming-bird shall plume the quivering song,
Blithe, gay, and restless, never dull or long,
Where gaily passionate his soul is set
To sing the Katydid's supreme regret,
Or creaking jokes, through never-ending days,
Rolls the quaint story of the Deacon's chaise.
Away with tears! When this glad poet sings,
The angel Laughter spreads her broadest wings.
By land and sea where'er St. George's cross
And the starred banner in the breezes toss,
The merry music of his wholesome mirth
Sends rippling smiles around our English earth."

"Not mine," Minerva cried, "to spoil thy joy;
Divide the honors,— let us share the boy!"

April 1892.

A DECANTER OF MADEIRA, AGED 86, TO GEORGE BANCROFT, AGED 86

GREETING:

I

Good master, you and I were born
In "Teacup days" of hoop and hood,
And when the silver cue hung down,
And toasts were drunk, and wine was good;

II

When kin of mine (a jolly brood)
From sideboards looked, and knew full well
What courage they had given the beau,
How generous made the blushing belle.

III

Ah, me! what gossip could I prate
Of days when doors were locked at dinners!
Believe me, I have kissed the lips
Of many pretty saints — or sinners.

IV

Lip service have I done, alack!
I don't repent, but come what may,
What ready lips, sir, I have kissed,
Be sure at least I shall not say.

V

Two honest gentlemen are we,—
I Demi John, whole George are you;
When Nature grew us one in years
She meant to make a generous brew.

VI

She bade me store for festal hours
The sun our south-side vineyard knew;
To sterner tasks she set your life,
As statesman, writer, scholar, grew.

VII

Years eighty-six have come and gone;
At last we meet. Your health to-night.
Take from this board of friendly hearts
The memory of a proud delight.

VIII

The days that went have made you wise,
There 's wisdom in my rare bouquet.
I 'm rather paler than I was;
And, on my soul, you 're growing gray.

IX

I like to think, when Toper Time
Has drained the last of me and you,
Some here shall say, They both were good,—
The wine we drank, the man we knew.

October 3, 1886, *Newport.*

THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF PAIN

A POEM READ OCTOBER SIXTEENTH, MDCCCXCVI, AT THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF SURGICAL ANÆSTHESIA IN THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL, BOSTON.

Forgive a moment, if a friend's regret
Delay the task your honoring kindness set.
I miss one face to all men ever dear;
I miss one voice that all men loved to hear.
How glad were I to sit with you apart,
Could the dead master [1] use his higher art
To lift on wings of ever-lightsome mirth
The burdened muse above the dust of earth,
To stamp with jests the heavy ore of thought,
To give a day with proud remembrance fraught,
The vital pathos of that Holmes-spun art
Which knew so well to reach the common heart!
Alas! for me, for you, that fatal hour!
Gone is the master! Ah! not mine the power
To gild with jests that almost win a tear
The thronging memories that are with us here.

The Birth of Pain! Let centuries roll away;
Come back with me to nature's primal day.
What mighty forces pledged the dust to life!
What awful will decreed its silent strife,
Till through vast ages rose on hill and plain
Life's saddest voice, the birthright wail of pain!

[1] Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The keener sense and ever-growing mind
Served but to add a torment twice refined,
As life, more tender as it grew more sweet,
The cruel links of sorrow found complete
When yearning love, to conscious pity grown,
Felt the mad pain-thrills that were not its own.

What will implacable, beyond our ken,
Set this stern fiat for the tribes of men?
This none shall 'scape who share our human fates:
One stern democracy of anguish waits
By poor men's cots, within the rich man's gates.
What purpose hath it? Nay, thy quest is vain:
Earth hath no answer. If the baffled brain
Cries, 'T is to warn, to punish! — ah, refrain.
When writhes the child beneath the surgeon's hand,
What soul shall hope that pain to understand?
Lo! Science falters o'er the hopeless task,
And Love and Faith in vain an answer ask,
When thrilling nerves demand what good is wrought
Where torture clogs the very source of thought.

Lo! Mercy, ever broadening down the years,
Seeks but to count a lessening sum of tears.
The rack is gone; the torture-chamber lies
A sorry show for shuddering tourist eyes.
How useless pain both Church and State have learned
Since the last witch or patient martyr burned.
Yet still, forever, he who strove to gain
By swift despatch a shorter lease for pain
Saw the grim theatre, and 'neath his knife
Felt the keen torture in the quivering life.
A word for him who, silent, grave, serene,

The thought-stirred actor on that tragic scene,
Recorded pity through the hand of skill,
Heard not a cry, but, ever conscious, still
In mercy merciless, swift, bold, intent,
Felt the slow moment that in torture went
While 'neath his touch, as none to-day has seen,
In anguish shook life's agonized machine.
The task is o'er; the precious blood is stayed;
But double price the hour of tension paid.
A pitying hand is on the sufferer's brow —
"Thank God, 't is over!" Few who face me now
Recall this memory. Let the curtain fall;
Far gladder days shall know this storied hall!

Though Science, patient as the fruitful years,
Still taught our art to close some fount of tears,
Yet who that served this sacred home of pain
Could e'er have dreamed one scarce-imagined gain,
Or hoped a day would bring his feartful art
No need to steel the ever-kindly heart?

So, fled the years! while haply here or there
Some trust delusive left the old despair;
Some comet thought flashed fitful through the night,
Prophetic promise of the coming light;
Then radiant morning broke, and ampler hope
To art and science gave illumined scope.

What angel bore the Christlike gift inspired!
What love divine with noblest courage fired
One eager soul that paid in bitter tears
For the glad helping of unnumbered fears,
From the strange record of creation tore

The sentence sad each sorrowing mother bore,
Struck from the roll of pangs one awful sum,
Made pain a dream, and suffering gently dumb!
Whatever triumphs still shall hold the mind,
Whatever gift shall yet enrich mankind,
Ah! here no hour shall strike through all the years,
No hour as sweet as when hope, doubt, and fears,
'Mid deeping stillness, watched one eager brain,
With Godlike will, decree the Death of Pain.

How did we thank him? Ah! no joy-bells rang,
No pæans greeted, and no poet sang;
No cannon thundered from the guarded strand
This mighty victory to a grateful land!
We took the gift so humbly, simply given,
And, coldly selfish — left our debt to Heaven.
How shall we thank him? Hush! A gladder hour
Has struck for him; a wiser, juster power
Shall know full well how fitly to reward
The generous soul that found the world so hard.

Oh, fruitful Mother, you whose thronging States
Shall deal not vainly with man's changing fates,
Of free-born thought or war's heroic deeds,
Much have your proud hands given, but naught exceeds
This heaven-sent answer to the cry of prayer,
This priceless gift which all mankind may share.

A solemn hour for such as gravely pause
To note the process of creation's laws!
Ah, surely, He whose dark, unfathomed mind
With prescient thought the scheme of life designed,
Who bade His highest creature slowly rise,

Spurred by sad needs and lured by many a prize,
Saw with a God's pure joy His ripening plan,
His highest mercy brought by man to man.

1896.

A PRAYER, AFTER SANTIAGO

"And in Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things."— Psalm xlv. 4.

Almighty God! eternal source
Of every arm we dare to wield,
Be Thine the thanks, as Thine the force,
On reeling deck or stricken field;
The thunder of the battle hour
Is but the whisper of Thy power.

Thine is our wisdom, Thine our might;
Oh, give us, more than strength and skill,
The calmness born of sense of right,
The steadfast heart, the quiet will
To keep the awful tryst with death,
To know Thee in the cannon's breath.

By Thee was given the thought that bowed
All hearts upon the victor deck,
When, high above the battle-shroud,
The white flag fluttered o'er the wreck,
And Thine the hand that checked the cheer
In that wild hour of death and fear!

O Lord of love! be Thine the grace
To teach, amid the wrath of war,
Sweet pity for a humbled race,
Some thought of those in lands afar
Where sad-eyed women vainly yearn
For them that never shall return.

Great Master of earth's mighty school,
Whose children are of every land,
Inform with love our alien rule,
And stay us with Thy warning hand
If, tempted by imperial greed,
We, in Thy watchful eyes, exceed;

That in the days to come, O Lord,
When we ourselves have passed away,
And all are gone who drew the sword,
The children of our breed may say,
These were our sires, who, doubly great,
Could strike, yet spare the fallen state.

1898.

BOOKS AND THE MAN[1]

When the years gather round us like stern foes
That give no quarter, and the ranks of love
Break here and there, untouched there still abide
Friends whom no adverse fate can wound or move:

[1] William Osler. Read to the Charaka Club, March 4, 1905.

A deathless heritage, for these are they
Who neither fail nor falter; we, alas!
Can hope no more of friendship than to fill
The mortal hour of earth and, mortal, pass.

Steadfast and generous, they greet us still
Through every fortune with unchanging looks,
Unasked no counsel give, are silent folk;
The careless-minded lightly call them books.

Of the proud peerage of the mind are they,
Fair, courteous gentlemen who wait our will
When come the lonely hours the scholar loves,
And glows the hearth and all the house is still.

Wilt choose for guest the good old doctor knight,
Quaint, learned and odd, or very wisely shrewd,
Or with Dan Chaucer win a quiet hour
Far from our noisy century's alien mood?

Wilt sail great seas on rhythmic lyrics borne,
In the high company of gallant souls,
Where, ringed with stately death, proud Grenville lies,
Or the far thunder of the Armada rolls?

Wilt call that English lad Fabricius taught
And Padua knew, and that heroic soul —
Our brave Vesalius? Long the list of friends,
Far through the ages runs that shining roll.

How happy he who, native to their tongue,
A mystic language reads between the lines:
Gay, gallant fancies, songs unheard before,
Ripe with the worldless wisdom love divines;

Rich with dumb records of long centuries past,
The viewless dreams of poet, scholar, sage;
What marginalia of unwritten thought
With glowing rubrics deck the splendid page!

Some ghostly presence haunts the lucid phrase
Where Bacon pondered o'er the words we scan.
Here grave Montaigne with cynic wisdom played,
And lo, the book becomes for us a man!

Shall we not find more dear the happy page
Where Lamb, forgetting sorrow, loved to dwell,
Or that which won from Thackeray's face a smile,
Or lit the gloom of Raleigh's prison cell?

And if this gentle company has made
The comrade heart to pain an easier prey,
They, too, were heirs of sorrow; well they know
With what brave thoughts to charm thy cares away.

And shouldst thou crave an hour's glad reprieve
From mortal cares that mock the mind's control,
For thee Cervantes laughs the world away!
What priest is wiser than our Shakespeare's soul?

Show me his friends and I the man shall know;
  This wiser turn a larger wisdom lends:
Show me the books he loves and I shall know
  The man far better than through mortal
    friends.

Do you perchance recall when first we met,
  And gaily winged with thought the flying
    night,
And won with ease the friendship of the
    mind? —
  I like to call it friendship at first sight.

And then you found with us a second home,
  And, in the practice of life's happiest art,
You little guessed how readily you won
  The added friendship of the open heart.

And now a score of years has fled away
  In noble service of life's highest ends,
And my glad capture of a London night
  Disputes with me a continent of friends.

But you and I may claim an older date,
  The fruitful amity of forty years,—
A score for me, a score for you, and so
  How simple that arithmetic appears!

But are old friends the best? What age, I ask,
  Must friendships own to earn the title old?
Shall none seem old save he who won or lost
  When fists were up or ill-kept wickets
    bowled?

Are none old friends who never blacked your
eyes?
Or with a shinny whacked the youthful shin?
Or knew the misery of the pliant birch?
Or, apple-tempted, shared in Adam's sin?

Grave Selden saith, and quotes the pedant King,
Old friends are best, and, like to well-worn
shoes,
The oldest are the easiest. Not for me!
The easy friend is not the friend I choose.

But if the oldest friends are best indeed,
I 'd have the proverb otherwise expressed —
Friends are not best because they 're merely old,
But only old because they proved the best.

ON THE RETURN OF THE CONFEDERATE FLAGS BY CONGRESS

We loved the wild clamor of battle,
The crash of the musketry's rattle,
The bugle and drum.
We have drooped in the dust, long and lonely;
The blades that flashed joy are rust only,
The far-rolling war-music dumb.

God rest the true souls in death lying,
For whom overhead proudly flying
We challenged the foe.
The storm of the charge we have breasted,

On the hearts of our dead we have rested,
In the pride of a day, long ago.

Ah, surely the good of God's making
Shall answer both those past awaking
And life's cry of pain;
But we never more shall be tossing
On surges of battle where crossing
The swift-flying death-bearers rain.

Again in the wind we are streaming,
Again with the war-lust are dreaming
The call of the shell.
What gray heads look up at us sadly?
Are these the stern troopers who madly
Rod straight at the battery's hell?

Nay, more than the living have found us,
Pale spectres of battle surround us;
The gray line is dressed.
Ye hear not, but they who are bringing
Your symbols of honor are singing
The song of death's bivouac rest.

Blow forth on the south wind to greet us,
O star flag! once eager to meet us
When war-lines were set.
Go carry to far fields of glory
The soul-stirring thrill of the story,
Of days when in anger we met.

Ah, well that we hung in the churches
In quiet, where God the heart searches,
That under us met

Men heard through the murmur of praying
The voice of the torn banners saying,
"Forgive, but ah, never forget."

April 1906

REMARKS OF DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL AT THE DINNER IN HONOR OF WILLIAM H. WELCH, 2 APRIL, 1910

Dr. Mitchell: *Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen, and You, my Friend, the Sacrificial Victim of the After-Dinner Hour:* Travel in strange lands is the more pleasant for knowledge of the language spoken, and it was the fact of my lack of tongues which made me doubt how fit I was to appear on this occasion, where, as I learned somewhat appalled, everybody was expected to talk *Welch.* To stumble bewildered, an intellectual tenderfoot, in the learned land of Johns Hopkins, might certainly give any man pause, but in the court of wisdom there must be of necessity a fool, and so I accept the position of the provider of sentimental folly and make my little venture.

'T is said that hovering near your infant couch
The fairy forms of Art and Science flew
In generous counsel o'er the golden gifts
They bade a joyous future pledge to you.

And if, they said, your life shall fail to give
What Bacon called the "hostages to fate,"
Unnumbered friends shall challenge love with love,
And ever through your happy hours elate.

Fair Nature, coyest of all maids that hold
  Reluctant mysteries from their lovers dear,
Shall on victorious quests divinely smile
  And tell her secrets to your listening ear.

Not yours shall be, companioned by the stars,
  To soar through space on thought's ambitious wings
To worlds unseen; nay, yours shall be to roam
  That wondrous other realm of little things.

There, half unread, the ever less and less
  Lost in the lessening less, eludes our sight
In space as sunless and more dark with fate
  Than are the baleful planets of the night.

There shall you stand upon the twilight verge,
  Where fades the sight of each material thing,
And baffled, wonder, what an hundred years
  To other eyes than ours may haply bring.

A lilliputian world to you we give,
  Where deadly swarm the grim bacterial blights,
With amboceptors, strange malignant priests,
  For demon marriage with satanic rites.

Here stegomyia and anopheles
  Are huge behemoths of this lesser sphere
Where gay spirilla wriggle lively tails,
  And vexed erythrocytes grow pale with fear.

"Be these your friends," the flitting fairies cried,
  "But who is this that leads a pirate crew?
'Bacterium chronos! Get you gone from hence,
  "Or hungry leucocytes we'll set on you!"

A truce to folly. Long ago for you
  Has rung the fatal hour of Osler's jest:
Still young, the merry smile, the glowing mind,
  No least sad failure ever yet confessed.

Life's summer overflow reserves for you
  The golden days of lingering life's September,
October loitering waits for you, my friend,
  And summer haunted glories of November.

Perhaps Johns Hopkins has some secret charm
  That lets professors very neatly swindle
The robber time and feel enfeebling days
  Toward youthful vigor quite reversely dwindle!

Alas, a most appalling doom awaits! —
  A pedriatic clinic at the end —
Pertussis, measles, teeth to cut, and then
  The bottle,— but which bottle? Ah! my friend,

We'll ask of Kelly, he will surely know
  When comes at last your latest, earliest year,
With all of physiology at fault
  How shall you ever gently disappear?

Far be the day for you. One grief I own;
  What science won my art has something cost
Since the clear mind and ever-ready smile
  Were to the bedside visit sadly lost.

Ave et vale! O magister, take
  Greeting and blessing from our greatest soul!
The rippling sweetness of his echoing verse
  I seem to hear from that far century roll.

Too poor my rhyme to fitly entertain
The stately splendor of the Latin line;
Ah! happy he to whom this greeting went —
Thy spirit-kinsman, Harvey — makes it thine!

"Vir doctissime!
Humanissime!
Vale mi' Amantissime!
Tuus ex anima."

TO ABRAHAM JACOBI, M.D.

At the dinner given to celebrate his seventieth birthday.

No honors hath the State for you whose life
From youth to age has known one single end.
Take from our lips two well-won titles now,
Magister et Amicus — Master, Friend.

Here on the summit of attainment's peak,
Far from the rugged path you knew to climb,
Take, with our thanks for high example set,
The palm of honor in this festal time.

Constant and brave, in no ignoble cause
The hopes of freedom armed your sturdy youth;
As true and brave in these maturer years
Your ardent struggle in the cause of truth.

Nor prison bars, nor yet the lonely cell,
Could break your vigor of unconquered will;
And the gray years which build as cruel walls
Have found and left you ever victor still.

Ave Magister! Take from us to-night
The well-earned praise of all who love our art
For this long season of unending work,
For strength of brain, and precious wealth of heart.

Much gave your busy hand; but, ah, far more,
The gallant life that taught men how to meet
Unfriended exile, sorrow, want, and all
That crush the weak with failure and defeat.

We gave you here a home; you well have paid
With many gifts proud freedom's generous hand
That bade you largely breathe a freer air,
And made you welcome to a freer land.

Ave Amice! If around this board
Are they who watched you thro' laborious years,
Beyond these walls, in many a grateful home,
Your step dismissed a thousand pallid fears.

That kindly face, that gravely tender look,
Thro' darkened hours how many a mother knew!
And in that look won sweet reprieve of hope,
Sure that all earth could give was there with you.

Ave Magister! Many be the years
That lie before you, thronged with busy hours!
Ave Amice! Take our earnest prayer
That all their ways fair fortune strew with flowers.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM HENRY DRUMMOND

THE CANADIAN POET

Peace to his poet soul. Full well he knew
To sing for those who know not how to praise
The woodsman's life, the farmer's patient toil,
The peaceful drama of laborious days.

He made his own the thoughts of simple men,
And with the touch that makes the world akin,
A welcome guest of lonely cabin-homes,
Found, too, no heart he could not enter in.

The toil-worn doctor, women, children, men,
The humble heroes of the lumber drives,
Love, laugh, or weep along his peopled verse,
Blithe 'mid the pathos of their meagre lives.

While thus the poet-love interpreted,
He left us pictures no one may forget —
Courteau, Baptiste, Camille mon frère, and, best,
The good, brave curé, he of Calumette.

With nature as with man at home, he loved
The silent forest and the birches' flight
Down the white peril of the rapids' rush,
And the cold glamor of the Northern night.

Some mystery of genius haunts his page,
Some wonder-secret of the poet's spell
Died with this master of the peasant thought.
Peace to this Northland singer, and farewell!

ODE ON A LYCIAN TOMB

IN MEMORIAM

INTRODUCTION

On this famous monument, known as Les Pleureuses, and now in the museum at Constantinople, one and the same mourning woman is carved in many attitudes of grief. These eighteen figures stand niched between Doric columns. Above and below are funeral scenes — battle and the chase.

ODE ON A LYCIAN TOMB

I

WHAT gracious nunnery of grief is here!
One woman garbed in sorrow's every mood;
Each sad presentment celled apart, in fear
Lest that herself upon herself intrude
And break some tender dream of sorrow's day,
Here cloistered lonely, set in marble gray.

Oh, pale procession of immortal love
Forever married to immortal grief!
All life's high-passioned sorrow far above,
Past help of time's compassionate relief:
These changeless stones are treasuries of regret
And mock the term by time for sorrow set.

Ah me! What tired hearts have hither come
To weep with thee, and give thy grief a voice;
And such as have not added to life's sum
The count of loss, they who do still rejoice
In love which time yet leaveth unassailed,
Here tremble, by prophetic sadness paled.

Thou who hast wept for many, weep for me,
For surely I, who deepest grief have known,
Share thy stilled sadness, which must ever be
Too changeless, and unending like my own,

Since thine is woe that knows not time's release,
And sorrow that can never compass peace.

He too who wrought this antique poetry,
Which wakes sad rhythms in the human heart,
Must oft with thee have wondered silently,
Touched by the strange revealments of his art,
When at his side you watched the chisel's grace
Foretell what time would carve upon thy face.

If to thy yearning silence, which in vain
Suggests its speechless plea in marbles old,
We add the anguish of an equal pain,
Shall not the sorrow of these statues cold
Inherit memories of our tears, and keep
Record of grief long time in death asleep?

Ah me! In death asleep; how pitiful,
If, in that timeless time the soul should wake
To wander heart-blind where no years may dull
Remembrance, with a heart forbid to break.
— Dove of my home, that fled life's stranded ark,
The sea of death is shelterless and dark.—

Cold mourner set in stone so long ago,
Too much my thoughts have dwelt with thee apart;
Again my grief is young: full well I know
The pang re-born, that mocked my feeble art
With that too human wail in pain expressed,
The parent cry above the empty nest!

Come back, I cried. "I may not come again.
Not islandless is this uncharted sea;

Here is no death, nor any creature's pain,
Nor any terror of what is to be.
'T is but to trust one pilot; soon are seen
The sunlit peaks of thought and peace serene."

II

Fair worshipper of many gods, whom I
In one God worship, very surely He
Will for thy tears and mine have some reply,
When death assumes the trust of life, and we
Hear once again the voices of our dead,
And on a newer earth contented tread.

Doubtless for thee thy Lycian fields were sweet,
Thy dream of heaven no wiser than my own;
Nature and love, the sound of children's feet,
Home, husbands, friends; what better hast thou known?
What of the gods could ask thy longing prayer
Except again this earth and love to share?

For all in vain with vexed imaginings,
We build of dreams another earth than ours,
And high in thought's thinned atmosphere, with wings
That helpless beat, and mock our futile powers,
Falter and flutter, seeing naught above,
And naught below except the earth we love.

Enough it were to find our own old earth
With death's dark riddle answered, and unspoiled
By fear, or sin, or pain; where joy and mirth
Have no sad shadows, and love is not foiled,
And where, companioned by the mighty dead,
The dateless books of time and fate are read.

III

What stately melancholy doth possess
This innocent marble with eternal doom!
What most imperious grief doth here oppress
The one sad soul which haunts this peopled tomb
In many forms that all these years have worn
One thought, for time's long comment more forlorn!

Lo grief, through love instinct with silentness,
Reluctant, in these marbles eloquent,
The ancient tale of loss doth here confess
The first confusing, mad bewilderment,
Life's unbelief in death, in love fore-spent,
Thought without issue, child-like discontent.

Time, that for thee awhile did moveless seem,
Again his glass hath turned: I see thee stand
Thought-netted, or, like one who in a dream
Self-wildered, in some alien forest land
Lone-wandering, in endless mazes lost,
Wearily stumbles over tracks re-crossed.

Oft didst thou come in after days to leave
Roses and laurel on thy warrior's grave,
And with thy marble self again to grieve,
Glad of what genius unto sorrow gave,
Interpreting what had been and would be,
Love, tears, despair, attained serenity.

There are whom sorrow leaves full-wrecked. The great
Grow in the urgent anguish of defeat,
And with mysterious confidence await

The silent coming of the bearer's feet;
Wherefore this quiet face so proudly set
To front life's duties, but naught to forget.

For life is but a tender instrument
Whereon the master hand of grief doth fall,
Leaving love's vibrant tissue resonant
With echoes, ever waking at the call
Of every kindred tone: so grief doth change
The instrument o'er which his fateful fingers range.

1899.

VESPERAL

I KNOW the night is near at hand.
The mists lie low on hill and bay,
The autumn sheaves are dewless, dry;
But I have had the day.

Yes, I have had, dear Lord, the day;
When at Thy call I have the night,
Brief be the twilight as I pass
From light to dark, from dark to light.

October 1899.

NOTES

NOTES

FRANCIS DRAKE.

THE difficulty of realizing to-day the feelings and motives of the men of another era is well illustrated in the incidents on which I have based the dramatic poem of "Francis Drake." In the poetical telling of it I have adhered with reasonable fidelity to the somewhat varying statements given in "The World Encompassed" (1628), Hakluyt Society, No. 16; the extracts of evidence as to the trial of Doughty from the Harleian manuscripts, in the same volume; Barrow's life of Drake; and an admirable but brief biography of the great sea-captain by Julius Corbett, in the series, "English Men of Action." I have had neither desire nor intention to make of this strange story an acting drama. Doughty, as he is drawn by Mr. Corbett, must have been, as he says, an Iago of rare type. A scholar, a soldier, a gentleman of the Inner Temple, more or less learned in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, he seems to have had great power to attract the affections of men. That he betrayed his friend's trust, and was guilty of mutiny, and even of contemplating darker crime, appears probable, although as to the details of this sad story we know little, but small fragments of the evidence given on the trial having been preserved. The historian, more than the poet, may well be perplexed at the nobler characteristics which appear in this singular being on the approach of death. It is here that the

judgments of to-day fail us before the account of the quiet, cheerful talk [1] at dinner while the headsman waits. An immense curiosity fills us as to what was said. Then, there are the sacrament taken with Drake, the final embrace, the remarkable words of quotation from Sir Thomas More,[2] omitted in the poem, and at last the axe and block. It is worthy of note that there is no woman in this tragic story.

CUP OF YOUTH.

I have accepted the popular version of Galileo's famous call to Rome to answer for his intellectual views. Much doubt has of late been thrown upon the received story of the peril to which his visit subjected him.

Long after the period in question grave men of science held to the possibility of reviving youth, and also believed in the transmutability of metals.

Galileo, trained as a physician, used the pendulum as a measurer of the pulse, causing it to beat even time with any special pulse by raising or lowering the weight or bob. Thus the length of the pendulum became a conventional measure of the rate of the pulse. Counting it with the aid of a watch, although first practised in the

[1] "They dined, also at the same table together, as cheerfully in sobriety as ever in their lives they had done aforetime; each cheering up the other, and, taking their leave, by drinking each to other, as if some journey only had been in hand." ("The World Encompassed," p. 67. Hakluyt Society's edition.)

[2] Doughty is credited in one account of his death with saying to the executioner, when about to lay his head on the block, "As good Sir Thomas More said, 'I fear thou wilt have little honesty [*i.e.*, credit] of so short a neck.'"

reign of Anne, was never common until the present century.

That "frail English boy" was William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood.

THE VIOLIN.

The belief that it is sinful to touch that which the shadow of the cross falls upon is a medieval fancy, but I cannot now recall where I have seen it mentioned.

I am indebted to Professor T. F. Crane, of Cornell University, for the strange legendary story of the thirty pieces of silver. I have, of course, taken great liberties with the old Latin version, as to which Professor Crane says:

"The legend of the thirty pieces of silver is found only in Gottfried of Viterbo's 'Pantheon,' a rare work reprinted in Scriptores Rerum Germanicorum, Ratisbon, 1726 (ed. Pistorius and Stoure). I have copied it from M. du Meril, Poésies Populaires Latines du Moyen Age, Paris, 1847, p. 321, also a scarce work. I do not know of any other accessible version, although the legend was copied from Gottfried by various legend-writers of the time. Where Gottfried got it I cannot tell."

FRANÇOIS VILLON.

François Villon, born 1431, poet, thief, vagabond, led a life of excesses in which were sharp experiences of the prison and the torture-chamber. His ballad "Des Pendus" was written in 1461, whilst he was under sentence of death. Soon after he is lost to history, and becomes fair subject for the imagination. There is not the least foundation in any known facts for the story I have labelled with his name.

CERVANTES.

Cervantes, who lost a hand at Lepanto, was for five years a prisoner in Algiers, and on his release lived a life of sad vicissitudes, dying in want on the 23d of April, 1616, the day of Shakespeare's death. Where lie the bones of the creator of Don Quixote is wholly unknown.

HERNDON.

On Sept. 12, 1857, the Central America was lost at sea. Captain Herndon of the navy was in command. His tranquil courage preserved discipline up to the last, and until his passengers, officers, and crew were all in the boats. Seeing that the last boat was already overloaded, Captain Herndon refused to add to its danger, and, ordering it off, went down with his ship.

GRAVES OF REGICIDES.

The regicides buried in the church of St. Martin, at Vevey, are Broughton, Ludlow, and Phelps. The tombstones of the first two are visible. Phelps has recently been commemorated by a stone placed upon the wall by the American descendants of his family,— the Phelpses of New England and New Jersey. Ludlow and Broughton lived to a great age at Vevey, and so, also, I believe, did Phelps, of whom less is known.

KEARSARGE.

On Sunday morning, June 19, 1864, the noise of the cannon during the fight between the Kearsarge and the Alabama was heard in English churches near the Channel.

DOMINIQUE DE GOURGUES.

In 1565, Menendez, an officer of Philip II. in Florida, put to death, under circumstances of strange atrocity, two hundred and eighty French Huguenots, most of whom were driven by starvation to surrender at discretion. Dominique de Gourgues, a French soldier, avenged this massacre as I have described, devoting to this purpose his fortune, and exposing himself to the malice of his own King, Charles IX. I have used a poet's license in the introduction of a supernatural influence. The tale is told at length by my friend the late Francis Parkman, in his "Pioneers of France in the New World."

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